

COUNTRY LIFE

THE JOURNAL FOR ALL INTERESTED IN
COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY PURSUITS.

ILLUSTRATED.

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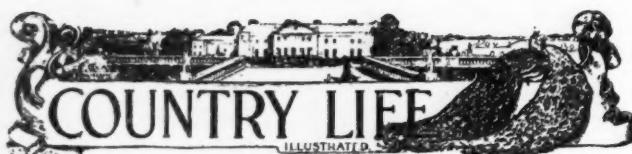
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THE Journal for all interested in
Country Life and Country Pursuits.

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MR. CHOATE ON FREE LIBRARIES.

UPON Mr. Choate, the Ambassador of the United States in this country, fell the duty of declaring open the Free Library at Acton, which is the fruit, for the most part, of the public-spirited liberality of Mr. Passmore Edwards. The task could by no means have been assigned more appropriately, for not only is Mr. Choate a ready and suggestive speaker, as all his predecessors in his most honourable office have been, but also the subject was one upon which an enlightened representative of the United States necessarily had practical information to impart. That part of his speech which dealt with the system of travelling libraries in the United States was of the highest interest. Parcels of a hundred books travel from township to township. They remain, they take up residence, so to speak, for a fixed period. Then, when they have been read by as many men and women as are ever likely to read them, they are sent on to the next centre, and a new batch comes to the original township. Mr. Choate asks whether there are any villages or districts in Great Britain so remote as to stand in need of a similar institution of travelling libraries, and, of course, the answer is

that there are plenty of them, far too many in fact. We learn also, from the *Academy*, that the system exists, and is found to be self-supporting, in several English counties, that Mr. W. T. Stead organised it some years ago, and that before his organisation began the system was in use in Hampshire and in Yorkshire. Undoubtedly it is a good system and capable of extension, and the subject is one which the County Councils might take up seriously with great advantage. The less Mr. Stead has to do with the matter the greater will be the confidence of the public in the beneficial tendency of the scheme, for, notwithstanding justification, the public has its suspicions of the delicacy of Mr. Stead's taste in literature. All further steps in the same direction we desire most cordially to encourage, and we will indicate some of them; but before doing so it is well to state our reasons for accepting with warm and genuine enthusiasm the suggestion of Mr. Choate.

It is in the matter of knowledge that Englishmen, and, for that matter, Scots and Irish and Welsh, find themselves too often left behind by the foreigner. We compel all children to attend elementary schools; we enforce payment of the expense of these schools upon the ratepayers; but the education which we enforce is for the most part entirely preliminary. It turns out boy or girl, not educated, but fairly equipped for the purpose of receiving education. They have their tools, so to speak; how are they to use them to profitable purpose? To keep them at school longer by compulsion is out of the question. Bread must be earned before it can be eaten. Father's wages are low, and in the rural districts the lads must begin early "to plough and to sow, and to reap and to mow, and to be a farmer's boy." So, far more often than could be believed, and far more quickly, they forget all that they have ever learned, and relapse into something approaching to absolute illiteracy. That means that they become less and less profitable as citizens, more and more hopelessly addicted to the old grooves, less capable of rising to higher things, and less competent to perform the ordinary duties of their rustic lives. This last statement we enunciate without argument and without apology. Knowledge is power, and everybody who is worthy of consideration admits the fact now. And knowledge is something more; to possess it and to have the means of extending it is to have in hand new opportunities of enjoyment, new charms against the demon of dulness, which is the cause of half the crimes in country life and the cause of half the deserters from it. Those winter evenings without books are a terrible subject of contemplation, and we honestly believe that the country-folk would appreciate and use to the full all opportunities of escaping them through the instrumentality of books.

Every village ought to have its permanent library, which, in addition to its own books, would serve as the temporary home of the travelling library. Supposing so much to be conceded, many subsidiary questions arise. First, where are the funds for the purchase of books to come from? That in the majority of cases might, we think, very safely be left to private generosity; in the exceptional cases the Parish Council might be empowered to make a small annual grant in aid. Then the library must have a home in the parish room or in the village shop, and the latter would probably be the more suitable, for the library would require a custodian. Moreover, the village shopkeeper, if wise in his or her generation, would probably use every effort to secure the custody of the library, which would certainly attract customers. Then there must be a selecting and managing authority, upon which there should be no *ex-officio* representation. Thus there would be no clerical dictation of the wrong kind and an abundance of clerical guidance of the right kind, for the parson whose guidance was worth having would be elected as a matter of course, and the fussy, interfering, small-minded parson who is so grave, but fortunately so rare, a misfortune would be left in the lurch. For the books, they should be of all sorts, entertaining and instructive. There should be books for young men and maidens, for the middle-aged and for the old also. The very children should not be forgotten, and for them there might be provided untearable books, an attention which would attract the mothers also to the library. In fact, the main object of all those interested in the promotion of the movement should be to encourage the whole rustic community to regard the village library as the centre of "sweetness and light," and if that object were realised, it would, *ipso facto*, be a distributing centre of increased efficiency also. Nor is this an Utopian dream in any sense; nothing but organisation is required to carry it into effect. The question is what sort of organisation, public or private, would be the better, and perhaps an answer to it is to be found in ingenious compromise. A committee of management ought certainly to be appointed, and the Parish Council ought decidedly to have something to say in the appointment of the committee. But the committee need not necessarily be composed exclusively of members of the council. Outsiders might also be elected, and amongst them would be found persons of culture who would be able and willing to give not only money but books. To sum up, Mr. Choate is no dreamer; he has suggested a working idea.



AS the country has borne evil fortune steadfastly, so we hope it will not be unduly elated by the splendid victory won by Sir George White at Ladysmith, for there is still a long road to travel. The general feeling is one of acute joy that Sir George White, who was well known to be a general of more than common ability, has enjoyed and has seized an opportunity. On the other hand, there is something of a feeling that the results of the victory are, to borrow a phrase from Mr. Kruger, "moral and intellectual" for the most part, for at the moment of writing the Boers have been beaten back, but Ladysmith is still invested.

Then there is a certain amount of difference of opinion upon the question why the Boers ventured to depart from their traditional method of fighting and to attempt an assault, although there is no doubt that, having made up their minds to the venture, they fought remarkably well. In attempting to resolve these doubts the critic may follow either of two courses. He may try to be original, in which case he is likely to be interesting but wrong; or he may look for the obvious and common-place explanation. What is that? The first part of it is that, according to all reports, the Boers round Ladysmith have really suffered a good deal of privation and inconvenience. The second part of it is that, ignorant as the mass of the Boers are, their leaders are undoubtedly supplied with ample information of what is going on in this country. And what do they learn? That public spirit is bursting forth in an irresistible flood, as when a huge reservoir of underground water is discovered; that the stream of fighting men goes on flowing to South Africa without intermission; that the quality of it is of the very best; in other words, that they have nothing to gain by playing the waiting game, and everything to lose.

Meanwhile, honour to whom honour is due. The rich Uitlanders who have made huge fortunes in Johannesburg have been the subject of a good deal of rancorous abuse at the hands of those to whom wealth itself is an offence. They have been accused of forcing on the war with a view to their own ultimate profit. With that kind of accusation it is no part of our purpose to deal. But it is not to be denied that the result of the war will be largely to the benefit of the mine-owning Uitlanders. Theirs is a great enterprise which will certainly be conducted to greater advantage under a settled and a pure government than has been the case hitherto. It is but fair that they should bear a large part of the expense, and those who do so without compulsion deserve to be praised. For this reason we call special attention to the splendid donation of £50,000 given by the firm of Wernher and Beit, and we point out that there are others who could very well afford to follow their example.

COUNTRY LIFE is highly honoured, and for a while bereaved. "Outpost," whose knowledge of racing and chasing and of the breeding of horses is hardly to be matched in England, has accepted the command of a squadron of Imperial Yeomanry. His bishopric during his absence will be administered ably. He will, we fancy, give a good account of himself. Long ago he was a gunner, he has seen active service, and he is an absolutely first-rate rider who has won the Grand Military, and there are few men in England of a more vigorous habit of body.

Evidence comes from all sides that the human reserves of the British Empire in its day of trial are of the most varied description. There will meet in South Africa before long one body of men versed in the way of the Australian bush, and another body of specially selected gillies under the command of Lord Lovat. These gillies are the men familiar to all deer-stalkers. They are all mounted on small but hardy ponies. Their keenness of vision, their skill in using the field-glass, and their aptitude in taking advantage of every cover, are well known to all sportsmen.

In the *Daily News* appears the following note. "The Boer commanders have written to Colonel Baden-Powell expressing their indignation at the bad Dutch in his manifesto." Thereupon the *Daily News* is moved to verse:

"By Blake and Botha our B.P.'s abhorred,
No wonder: his ferocity is such,
Not only does he slaughter with his sword,
But even in his noes he murders Dutch."

The only objection to the verse is that it is not sparkling. Even at first sight it occurs to us that our "B.P." might have answered thus more pointedly:

"*Facta non verba*—while you Boers I hammer
I can't be bored to Botha over grammar."

The Yeomanry, as originally raised, were intended as a home and local cavalry force, to resist a threatened French invasion mainly, but with some reference to the chance of an outbreak of rebellion at home on French Jacobin lines. All that has passed by; but the Yeomanry are still recruited from the same class as at the beginning of the century. They were, and are, mainly farmers; men of substance with property to lose, and a business to manage, needing constant supervision. The first Yeomanry took up arms voluntarily to save their own farms and stackyards, and the rest of the soil of old England, from possible plunder. To expect a force so recruited to leave in great numbers for campaigns across the seas would be unreasonable; yet numbers have volunteered. We know cases in which farmers occupying 500 acres have risked all, handed the management over to a neighbour, and volunteered for the front. But the sacrifices so made are great; and if the local Yeomanry are unable to do this in any great numbers, there are thousands of "unattached" men who can and will join, and meantime we hope the local men will not be rebuked, as they were recently in a western county, because they cannot serve abroad.

There is a small piece of outfit that seems likely to be even more generally required than a field-glass, and this is a pair of nippers to cut barbed wire. It is hard to say what punishment can fit the crime of the man who first invented barbed wire, though even he probably never foresaw the development of his hideous invention to its use in war. The Spaniards in Cuba endeavoured, rather futilely, to make a kind of Great Wall of China across the island with it. The Boers used it as an effective check at Magersfontein, and it seems that they have the Tugela River full of it. One of the worst cuts from barbed wire we have seen was inflicted on a valuable hunter by wire hidden in water. It had been stretched across to prevent cattle fording the brook in summer. Again, it would be well that our Government should know the best and most convenient style of nippers. It may, perhaps, be enough that one man in a company should be able, with a telescope, to act as its eyes, but each will have to carve his own way through the barbed wire entanglements, and a pair of nippers to each man seems not in excess of the requirements.

Amongst the numberless instances of the patriotism that is so finely in evidence we may notice one more particularly, as being a little out of the common run, even as the opportunity of displaying it in this special form is not given to many. Mr. L. G. Browne, owner of a great estate in Australia, had cabled to his agent instructions to put at the disposal of the Agent-General of South Australia as many of the estate horses as possible for use with the South African contingent. Where mobility, which is almost another term for horses, is so obviously a crying need, the value of a gift of horses, probably just of the stamp required, is not to be over-estimated. As to the requisite equine stamp, it is of the small wiry horse, with a sufficient length of tail for protection from insects.

There cannot be the least doubt that one of the largest factors in the ability of the Boer as a soldier is the mobility which he owes to his horse. One of the biggest problems of the campaign, from the point of view of our Home Authorities, is the supply of horses, and in this regard many an old Indian officer in the clubs is expressing surprise that more use has not been made of the supply that is native to South Africa. One of the great sources of equine supply to India in the old days was actually South Africa itself, and the African horses were always preferred to those that came from the chief alternative source, Australia, which sent the so-called "Walers." Can it be that our Government has altogether exhausted the native equine resources of South Africa? Have not the Basutos a great supply of useful, if small and weedy, horses, on which we might usefully draw? It would be a great matter to obtain horses ready and fit for work, instead of bringing them over the sea, and having to wait till they recover from the effects of the voyage.

One of the most remarkable features of the moment is the immense leap in the demand for colonial butter. During the first four months of the season for it 72,299 tons were imported

in 1897, and about the same quantity in 1898, but in 1899 the amount jumped up to more than double—viz., 158,463 tons. These figures apply to Australia and New Zealand, but very much the same thing has happened in Canada, where the increase is from 80,000 tons in 1897 to 143,500 tons in 1899. In each case the best wholesale price is just under a shilling a pound. Such facts bear a significant meaning for the English dairyman. Whatever be the case in summer he cannot in winter produce good butter at the price. Should he try, the difference between that from the Australian meadow grass and his own will be painfully apparent. The moral is that he shall sell his milk in winter and work the churn in summer.

We notice that an agricultural expert ventures to prophesy that before the twentieth century reaches middle age farming in England will mostly be carried on by syndicates. His conclusion is that the labourer's dislike to the soil is rooted and permanent, and that the only way to get on will be by cultivating large areas and making a free use of machinery. But what a rash thing to prophesy about. The colonial and foreign food supply on which we rely is liable to be cut off at any moment. Before making even a decent guess, it will be necessary to understand the aims and objects of all continental countries, the future growth of population in exporting countries, and also what further discoveries are to be made by chemists and botanists. These are all factors that must help to shape the husbandry of the future.

A strongly held notion of the Duke of Portland is that every farmer ought to have one or two good half-bred horses, and all the better if there is blood in everything. Nor has he spared money or trouble to ensure that his tenants shall in this matter set the fashion. He has bought sires and even lent mares, he has held special shows and judged them himself, all in order to encourage horse breeding. The war has given additional strength to his theory. It has proved that mounted infantry are likely to form the soldiers of the future, and the best mount for the purpose will be exactly such a half-bred animal as the Duke has so long favoured. The fact is certainly worth noting by those who have an eye to this department of agriculture.

Mr. William Senior, well known and well loved by all of us under his *nom de guerre* of "Red Spinner," has taken over the chief editorship of the *Field*, on the death of Mr. Frederic Toms. The late chief editor had given much attention to the powder and shot charges in sporting guns. Mr. Senior, as we all know, is a man of the river rather than the hill or covert, but he has that sympathy and interest in all branches of sport that ensures justice being dispensed to all from the editorial throne which he is now occupying. Besides that, "Billy" Senior is one of the most charming men and one of the most fascinating writers in the world.

Lady Clifford of Chudleigh's annual Christmas amateur dramatic entertainment, which took place on four consecutive nights last week, at Ugbrooke Park, Chudleigh, Devonshire, proved even more successful than last year's performances. The first piece on the programme was Pinero's original comedy in two acts, "The Moneyspinner," in which the characters were admirably sustained by Captain Ulick Browne, Mr. Alfred Farquhar, Lord Clifford, Mr. Claude Ponsonby, Mr. Stewartson, Miss Mabilia Daniell, Miss B. Stafford Northcote, and Lady Clifford, the comedy being produced under the direction of Mr. Claude Ponsonby. "The Queen of Caviardo," a musical up-to-date absurdity by Mr. William Leese, was performed with much spirit by Mr. Percy Lee, Mr. Henry Leigh, Mr. John Liptrott, Mr. Wilfred Stephenson, Miss Nina Dickson, Mr. Stuart Anderson, Mr. William Leese, Miss Emily Greenwood, and Miss Mabilia Daniell, and enthusiastically received. Mr. Stanley Hawley, at the piano, played the accompaniments and incidental music with his customary skill and artistic feeling, and the pretty little theatre was crowded every night. Mr. de Zulueta sang.

It is singular how completely England seems to have lost the art, or the tradition, or whatever it is, of Rugby football. Rugby football, as its name implies, is of English invention. England has more clubs and more members to draw from than any of the other nominal divisions of a very United Kingdom, yet Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are each undoubtedly England's superior at the Rugby game just now. Why is it? Probably that English clubs have gone a little astray in the tactics they adopt, in the models they follow, perhaps have worshipped the wrong heroes—false gods. There is a deal of harm unsuspectedly done in that way.

It is rather amusing to compare the result of the English and Welsh Rugby Union football match with prophecies. The result was fairly hollow, for Wales, playing a hard rather than a clever game, won quite easily. On the other hand, the Welsh critics, who think a very great deal of this game and devoted to it

many columns of anticipatory comments, were full of doubts on the eve of the match. Very sad was it to see that they rested all their hopes—such as they were—upon quarrels between the North and South of England, and upon the decadence of football in the South. For our own part, we are inclined to think that the victory of Wales was largely due to the fact that the Rugby Union talent of the Principality is collected within a comparatively small and very populous area in the South, so that the players know one another's ways. Moreover, the Welsh captain must be a tower of strength to any team. The man who has played in twenty-eight consecutive International matches, and is still described as "daring and clever as ever," is likely to keep the team well together and to inspire it, and that is Bancroft's record.

The Duchess of Connaught has accepted the presidency of the Ladies' Kennel Association, on the retirement of Lady Ilchester. The canine appeal to the purses of patriots has been responded to with great warmth, and we understand that the sum which the dogs have now collected has risen from the 2,000 guinea figure at which it stood at the date of the West End Winter Show to over £3,000. It is proposed to hold another dog parade some time in March, by which time dog lovers may have saved up some more spare crumbs of charity.

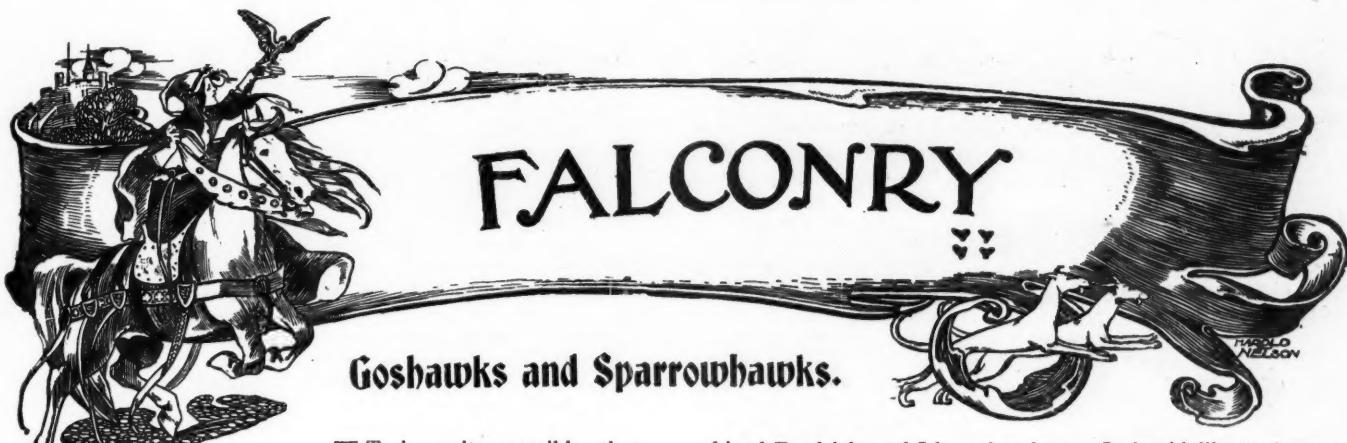
So many in the country now are ardently anxious to help the Empire, yet doubtful in what direction efforts to that end may best be made, that it is scarcely possible to give too much publicity to the excellent suggestion of forming rifle clubs. The value of accurate rifle shooting, even though the rifles are in the hands of amateur soldiers, has been already proved to our terrible cost by the events of the war. The formation of clubs for rifle shooting is a means of helping the country which is within the reach of many who have the leisure and the resources to stimulate by their example and subscribe out of their purses. Rifle shooting, moreover, is an interesting occupation, and its utility does not detract from the pleasure of its practice.

Rabbits this season seem to be peculiarly early in beginning their nursery arrangements, and we have already, just after the turn of the year, come upon many young families, increasing enormously the difficulty in ferreting the bunnies out. In some countries rabbits both go to hole more readily and stay in their holes more obstinately than in others, and it is not a little surprising that people who go in for rabbit shooting as a principal factor of their sport do not more often try an infusion of the blood of rabbits from the gorse coverts near the sea, where the bunnies lie out more than elsewhere. In several cases where we have known an importation of this seaside stock to be tried the results have been uniformly good, and the rabbits have become distinctly less subterranean in their habits.

It is announced that the French Government, looking out for a new source of revenue, has determined to plant fruit trees all along the public high roads of France. The French are a law-abiding people, but the announcement, one imagines, will carry joy to the heart of the French boy. The side of the public road is hardly the most prudent place in which to plant the choicest Ribston and Blenheim Oranges. On the other hand, it has frequently struck us that fruit trees might be planted to the great advantage of the farmer in the English hedgerow. There are, of course, farmers who will have nothing to say to trees in any shape. We have heard, indeed, a gentleman farmer in a very bleak county say that he hated the very sight of a tree, but where hedgerow timber exists there is no reason why it should not be useful. Without the smallest desire to displace the elm, the oak, and the ash, which adorn the landscape and make good timber when they are felled, we should not be at all sorry to see apples and pears in the place of much rubbishy timber which is to be found along the hedges.

The London County Club, it appears, under the auspices of Dr. Grace at the Crystal Palace, is endeavouring to blossom out into a full-grown county in the cricketing sense. There seems no reason that it should not, and indeed such a development would supply a certain want, for it is very sure that there are more fine cricketers in London town than the Middlesex side has place for, and should they wish to play for their native county, that county may chance to be Somerset or some other equally remote from the metropolis whither their business takes them. It seems more than likely that these waifs may find a pleasant refuge in the bosom of a new cricketing county.

Yet another new cure. All of us who live in London grow old, and some of us grow stout, and most of us suffer more or less from indigestion. All sorts of things have been recommended to us—horse exercise, bicycle exercise, fencing, gymnastic practice; in a word, what you will. But the last prescription is almost funny, for it is—simply—skipping! Laughter apart, however, there is probably no better exercise of its kind, and the effects on the liver are said to be quite wonderful.



Goshawks and Sparrowhawks.

IT is quite possible that several readers of these pages may know nothing of falconry, and but little of ornithology; and they may naturally ask: What do goshawks and sparrow-hawks look like, and what do they chiefly prey upon? As to what they look like, the photographs which illustrate this article will, in a very great measure, answer the question. It will be seen also that they look very like each other. The difference is in size, and in the tarsi and feet, which are thick and short in the goshawk, thin and long in the sparrow-hawk. The goshawk is by far the larger bird, and, notwithstanding its great general likeness to the smaller, naturalists have made a generic difference between them; the one is *Astur*, the other *Accipiter*. The goshawk flies fur and feather; the sparrow-hawk only feather. I need hardly remind any reader, perhaps, that there are short-winged hawks, and that we fly them from the fist, and not, as with the peregrine, from their pitch in the air.

My love for the peregrine has been known for more than forty years; she has, indeed, been faithful to me; but I have a very strong friendship for the goshawk. Let me, first of all, give a full description of her appearance, and this I will do in the words of my late friend William Brodrick, at whose house and at mine I had my first notions of what falconry meant, though it was confined entirely to the flying of one merlin, which he afterwards gave to me. The following is from "Falconry in the British Isles," a copy of which he gave me when it was first published: "The colour of the young goshawk differs considerably from that of the mature state. During the first year

the whole of the under portion of the body is of a rusty salmon colour, marked with long lanceolate streaks of blackish-brown, while the upper part is liver brown, each feather being margined with reddish-white. At first the eyes are grey; this colour gradually changes with age to lemon-yellow, and eventually becomes orange; the cere is wax-yellow, with the tarsi and feet of a deeper tone. At the first change the whole of the under plumage becomes light

grey, striped transversely with narrow bars of a dark brown colour, the top of the head, back, wings, and tail becoming of a uniform hair-brown, with fine distinct bars of a darker colour on the latter; there is also a streak of light grey over each eye, speckled, as are the cheeks, with minute brown splashes. The bars on the breast of the adult birds differ considerably in width in different individuals; the under tail-coverts are pure white."

I have had several goshawks. MEDUSA, my friend and companion for nine years and three months, died on my hand of aneurism, on December 15th, 1878. She was stuffed by my

friend Brodrick, and I have her here. I should like to have as many hundred pounds just now as I have killed rabbits with her; well, as many pounds.

To anyone who is ignorant of falconry, but would like to try a goshawk, I should say buy, if possible, a trained one to begin with; and, when bought, it would be necessary for the purchaser to see the man who has had the care of the bird fly her at quarry. After she has been left with the new owner, he should carry her a good deal, and make much of her, till she knows him well. Then he can do in the field precisely what he saw done when the bird was brought to him. Not until one knows something of the ways and vagaries—not always absolutely amicable—of a goshawk, is it wise to undertake the training of a perfectly unclaimed bird. And when one *does* know! A matter of taste and judgment. Can you stand the slavery of some weeks' fairly constant attention to the matter? This is no merlin, or eyess peregrine, you have to deal with. Let someone share the toil. The first goshawk I had I bought from the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens, and trained her *entirely* myself; she was a good hawk. But I would rather save time and trouble by putting such a bird into the hands of a professional falconer. Medusa had flown before I had her, and so had the others. With peregrines I was absolutely the only trainer, as I have said before.

Notwithstanding that chapter upon chapter has been written on the training of the goshawk during the last forty or fifty years by myself and others, it would be obviously improper to ignore it altogether in this present article. I seldom used the hood with these birds, and I hardly think that any of my brother falconers

have used or do use it at all as a rule; but of this I am not confident. Sometimes it may be necessary, as in travelling; but I once had a chat with the late Captain Dugmore at the window of a railway carriage, and he carried on his glove a male goshawk unhooded. If a room can be made absolutely dark (a rather difficult matter) I should certainly place the hawk which is in training there, on a bow-perch, when it is not being carried. Carry her amongst many

people whilst (the hawk being sharp-set) she pulls at the wing of a hen, or the leg of a rabbit, on which not very much meat is left. After some days take her near a wall or gate. She has been pulling on your glove for some time at what is left or a rabbit bone, and getting very little indeed to eat. Produce a piece of excellent beef-steak, quite fresh and free from fat; let your bird suddenly take a mouthful of it. This is the greatest delicacy you can give a hawk; she will eagerly look for a second mouthful; let her have it; but, in doing so, slip her feet on the gate or wall, hold the end of the leash firmly in your right hand, and place



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LOST.

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your gloved left, which holds the rabbit and the *steak*, almost on her feet; but before she seizes, calmly draw your hand away to the distance of 1½ ft., only just far enough to make it possible for her to jump on your glove. If she does jump you have gained a great first point. In a few days she will come to hand at 2yds. or 3yds. distance, she being placed on a wall, or on the ground, and a strong string being used—a “creance” falconers call it.

Increase the distance day by day. Then comes entering to quarry. I have supposed a female bird, but every word up to this point applies to a male also. Well, now you wish to fly your hen bird at rabbits; the male is too small for them. When she is on her bow-perch, sharp set, and expecting you to call her to hand for food, draw, with a longish string, a dead rabbit, which has the neck and shoulders stripped of skin, quietly within her reach. Let her take her pleasure on it. For the next two days carry her, but give her very little indeed to eat. On the third day, before eleven o'clock, call her to half a crop of tender beef-steak. On the fourth day, about twelve or one, she being on your glove, pull the string which opens an arrangement on the ground and lets out a live rabbit, also in a string. My strong impression is that she will take it; but then I assume



J. Lowe.

MEDUSA.

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that you will not have flown her without assuring yourself from her appearance and manner that she is in what we call *yarak*. Her plumage ought to be a little puffed out, her look eager, and perhaps there will be a little cry, which would seem to denote hunger.

But if she did not come to hand at once, if she bated at all, looked thoroughly uneasy, and chirped, put her back at once, for goodness sake; she would not fly that day, nor, perhaps, the next. In this very early stage it is well to use a string to the hawk as well as to the rabbit. But let us suppose she has taken the rabbit—I hope with one foot on the head and one on the shoulder—instantly put the quarry out of its misery; a knife with a long blade does this at once, and the hawk may take her pleasure on what she has caught. Of course, in time the real thing follows: she is carried to the field, and flies and kills wild rabbit after rabbit, just as your first bird did when the professional who brought her showed you how to fly her.

With regard to hares, a large female goshawk has the strength to take and hold one; but there are difficulties. If the hawk is flown at rabbits month after month, or even week after week, she will seldom look seriously at a hare; at any rate, she

is not to be depended on for flying one. I have taken a few hares by good luck with a goshawk which has been constantly flown at rabbits, but I hardly think that any one of them was absolutely full grown; and I have put up numbers which the bird would not fly at all, or, at best, would make a dash at, and then sit sulking on the ground. The rule is, if you want to fly hares, don't let the bird go at a rabbit.

But rules are nothing in moments of inspiration; and even a goshawk may be inspired. Like a man, she may rise to higher things, but without the stepping-stones. Look at the following—no gradations there! I take it from “Falconry: Its Claims, History, and Practice,” published in 1859, so that more than forty years have passed since I wrote it. Those were the days when men, great falconers now, came to me, a stranger, to learn the rudiments of the sport. I myself was only learning; I was teaching myself, and I tried to teach them. One word before I quote. As far as my memory serves me, I don't think that this hawk even attempted to fly a hare before. “I shall never forget a flight I had last year at a hare fully three-fourths grown. It was in a thin plantation. I did not see the hare jump up, nor indeed was I aware that anything moved. Vampire knew better. She was in almost screaming *yarak*, and shot from my hand gloriously. There were occasional bushes and a little underwood, and when the hare passed through them the hawk rose as high as the tops of the trees, coming down the instant there was an opening. It was one of those happy occasions when your bird seems to go beyond herself, and surprises you with a manner which is scarcely hers. . . . Vampire, owing, I confess, partly to the position of the trees and bushes, *stooped*; she was a falcon for five minutes. The flight occupied a period not very short of that time. Hawk and quarry passed twice over a stone wall; a bird which generally gave up after four unsuccessful strokes, if she was unlucky enough to want them, struck twenty times. As for me, ‘what was the world beside?’ It was sport, truly, but it was ecstasy also. It won't do again, even if I should ever see it again; but I had never seen it before. I dashed down the hill to find them; they came back and met me. ‘Stick to her, my girl, you shall have a rich feast.’ They were out of sight. . . . The well-known cry of a hare; she has really done it! . . . Talk of the beauties of sport—look at *that* picture! They were as still as statuary; they only breathed. The quarry had pressed forward on being taken; the hawk lay back, one foot over the head, the other on the shoulder of the hare. The fine second plumage of her long striped thigh lay like black and white mosaic, her head leaning towards that of her victim; one of its hind legs was inserted through the feathers of her wing. I have the hare's foot in my study here. Vampire is dead.”

Pheasants may be killed even with a female goshawk under certain circumstances. For instance, if the falconer is standing on high ground, and a pheasant rises well under him and fairly near, the hawk will take it before it gets into its swing. But the male bird is far better for this quarry; he is quicker in flight, and more adroit. Of course, he will want entering. A live pheasant can generally be procured without much difficulty; and if there is a difficulty, a barn-door fowl can be used. What has just been written with regard to entering to rabbits will give a sufficient indication of how this is to be done, and it is therefore useless to go into details. The male bird has been used with great success at partridges. He will take birds not quite full grown, when on the wing, if he has a very favourable start, and occasionally even an old partridge. But the truth is that this is a case in which two are needed—hawk and dog. A good spaniel, or terrier, thoroughly used to the hawk, and the hawk to him, is absolutely necessary. There are quantities of “puts in,” and the dog will kill more than the hawk kills by actually taking and holding. Birds are extremely frightened at the presence of a goshawk close to them, and will lie even in a not very deep covert for the dog to take.

Rats can be taken with a goshawk, and so can squirrels; but I will have nothing to do with squirrel-hawking. While I am writing, a squirrel is on the table eating nuts close to me. I only hope he won't walk over this sheet and blot it. It is a fine day; the window opens to the ground; he has just rung a bell outside to say he is here, and I have let him in. There are two of them almost equally tame. They have never been in confinement. We saw them in the trees, and gradually got them to come into the house by a line of nuts (the nuts placed a couple of yards or so apart), and so by degrees they are what they are. One comes on my shoulder, and takes nuts from under my coat collar. But I must remember that I am writing a chapter on hawking, not on taming wild squirrels.

I shall mention the goshawk again in an article which will follow this, and which, indeed, is part of it, but the greater portion of it will be taken up with the sparrow-hawk. There is an illustration of the latter bird given here. We have also my dear old friend Medusa. And that will do for the present.

PEREGRINE.



THREE is such a thing as breaking a butterfly on a wheel, or crushing it with a steam hammer; and the past week has produced the most amusingly ponderous example of it on record. Unhappy Mistress M. L. Gwynn compiled a birthday book, which was surely a very harmless and innocent proceeding. Mr. Methuen equipped the compilation very handsomely, and the *Academy* praised it, quoting a little bit of Chaucer which was assigned, very appropriately, to some date or other. The quotation ran thus:

"Out of the oldē fieldēs, as men sayeth,
Cometh all this new corne from yere to yere;
And out of oldē bookēs, in good faithe,
Cometh all this new science that men lere."

Then, as ill luck would have it, the eagle eye of Professor Skeat lighted on the review, and he wrote thus to the *Academy*: "It seems piteous that such fine lines should be so surprisingly misspelt. It would seem that Middle English is an unknown language; no one would dream of treating Latin or Greek or German after this sort. It is marvellous, moreover, how anyone could imagine that such lines can scan. The utterly shocking errors, ruining the metre, occur in the use of 'new' for the dissyllabic *newe*; 'corne' for the monosyllabic *corn*; 'yere' for the monosyllabic *year* in the former of the two instances; 'faithe' for the monosyllabic *faith* (better *feith*); and again, the form 'new' for *newe*, in the last line. Besides these, 'fieldes' should be *feldes*, and 'sayeth' should be *seith*. And it must be borne in mind that 'Cometh' represents *Com'mh*, a monosyllable. One thing to which Englishmen look forward with longing hope is the advent of a time when Middle English spelling shall be understood and duly respected."

This bull-headed attack of Dr. Dryasdust upon a harmless lady seems to me a legitimate occasion for dipping the pen into gall. If I had been the editor of the *Academy* I should have thrown the Professor's letter into the fire for many reasons. It is impolite, it is ponderous and pedantic; it impliedly accuses the editor of the *Academy* of ignorance less pardonable in him than in Mistress Gwynn, and when you come to look at it, it is really strained nonsense—in part, at any rate. Mrs. Gwynn, of course, simply took an accredited text of Chaucer, thought it was sure to be all right, found a remarkably pretty passage in it, and used it. Putting aside all this sledge-hammer stuff about the "Middle English" and all the microscopic criticism of spelling, I maintain that, for anybody who has an ear for verbal music, the lines run quite melodiously. Moreover, I do not believe for a moment that the "Middle English," if the phrase be applicable to the men who spoke and wrote it, cared a whit about spelling, which is in the main an accomplishment of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Then look at that last sentence, of which I italicise one or two salient words: "One thing to which Englishmen *look forward with longing hope* is the advent of a time when Middle English spelling shall be understood and duly respected." To which I answer that a great many more despairing Englishmen yearn—yes, yearn—for the time when professors shall exercise a

little common politeness and a little common-sense, and shall cease to make mountains out of molehills.

The duel between Mr. Robert Buchanan and Sir Walter Besant on the subject of Mr. Kipling is distinctly entertaining. Mr. Buchanan, with his natural ferocity of expression, declared that Mr. Kipling was a literary Hooligan, leading the generation into false ways. Sir Walter replies thus, in a very fine passage in the *Contemporary*: "Always, in every character, he presents a man: not an actor; a man with the passions, emotions, weaknesses, and instincts of humanity. It is perhaps one of the Soldiers Three; or it is the Man who went into the mountains because he would be a King; or the man who sat in the lonely lighthouse till he saw streaks; always the real man whom the reader sees beneath the uniform and behind the drink and the blackguardism. It is the humanity in the writer which makes his voice tremulous at times with unbroken pity and silent sympathy; it is the tremor of his voice which touches the heart of his audience."

It has been well remarked that neither criticism is purely literary. The meaning of the duel is that Mr. Buchanan, who, like Lear's young lady, expresses his feelings, does not like Mr. Kipling's robust love, and that Sir Walter cannot away with Mr. Buchanan's rude language. The truth is that, from the literary point of view, Mr. Kipling is a very uneven writer. Thus "The Recessional" and "The Absent-minded Beggar" are as far removed in point of merit and dignity as are the two poles, and the same may be said of the *Jungle Book* and "Stalky." But it is really not fair to judge Mr. Kipling by "The Absent-minded Beggar." He wrote it for a specific purpose, and it has achieved that purpose to a marvel. He is probably as well aware as Mr. Buchanan, or any of the numerous men of culture whose opinion I have asked upon the subject, that it is really very poor stuff. But he felt, and he felt rightly, that his reputation stood so high that he could afford to publish it.

The new *Punch* opens well, and the clear type is distinctly an advantage. Also Dr. Conan Doyle's Soudan story is distinctly good, although hardly so good as the comic hunting story in the *Strand*, which is one of the best and most surprising that I have ever read. Also, on the whole, it is well that Mr. *Punch*'s young men who write should, no less than those who draw, be allowed to sign their names. Especially do I like the parodies of Mr. Owen Seaman, and his satiric verse generally. I could always detect it without any signature, but the new plan saves one the trouble of reading other, and perhaps poorer, verse first. On the other hand, Mr. *Punch* must really get a new cartoonist. Even in a large seaside hotel, on a Sunday of incessant rain, when anything is welcome, everybody says so. And everybody is right.

Amongst the many Annuals which are published for the benefit and instruction of country gentlemen and agriculturists, that issued by Messrs. Day and Sons, of Crewe, the eminent veterinary chemists and providers, will be found to occupy a very high place. One of the most valuable features of this excellent little publication, which can be obtained post free of Messrs. Day and Sons for one penny, consists of the tables of imports, whilst the consumers of meat, eggs, and poultry will derive much valuable information from a perusal of the statistics referring to these. In all, "Day's Annual" is a most reliable little manual, and certainly the best pennyworth of its kind that has ever been published.

Books to order from the library:—

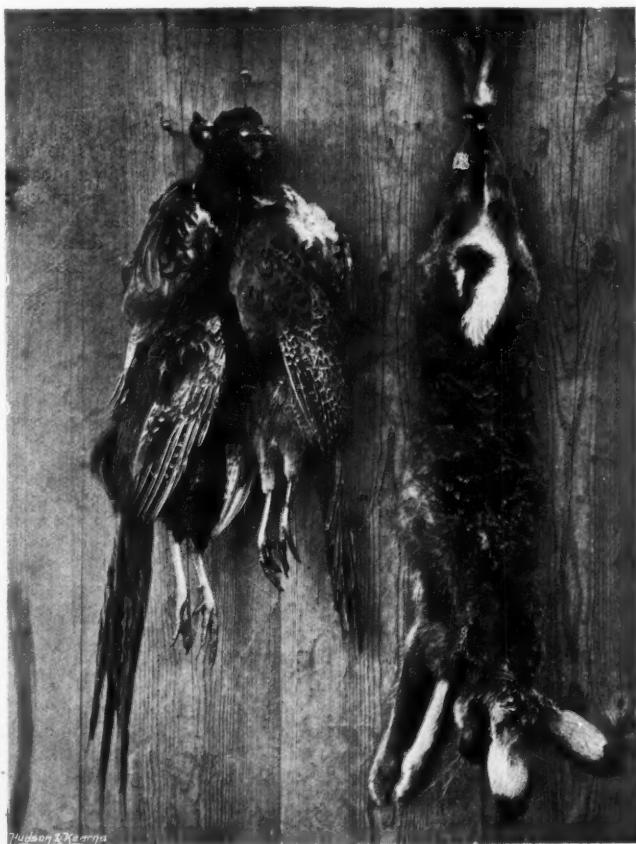
"In Cap and Bells," Owen Seaman. (Lane.)
"Active Service," Stephen Crane. (Heinemann.)
"Princess Feather," A. C. Inchbold. (Hutchinson.)
"Travellers for Ever," L. Cope Cornford. (Nutt.)

LOOKER-ON.

ON THE ROAD.

THE recent extraordinary performance of a motor-car on mail service in Lincolnshire should serve to remove the last element of prejudice from the minds of those who still doubt the practical efficiency of the self-propelled vehicle. It appears that on Christmas Day the mails could not be conveyed between Lincoln and Woodhall Spa, and to certain villages between Lincoln and Boston, owing to the fact that there was no train service. With praiseworthy consideration and enterprise, however—very exceptional, it may be added, in connection with the postal service—the postmaster at Lincoln decided to utilise a motor-car, and asked Messrs. Gilbert and Son, of that town, at only two days' notice, to make the necessary arrangements. As it happened, the car employed was at King's Lynn at the time, and at the very outset the superiority of automobilism over horseflesh was established by the fact that the car was driven across to Lincoln in the night in order to start with the mails early on Christmas morning. With an ordinary vehicle, of course, a change of horses would have been necessary. The car was an English Daimler waggonette, of 5½ horse-power, and was driven by Mr. P. H. Gilbert, with a post-office official and half a ton of mails on board. It left Lincoln post-office at 7.40 a.m., and reached the first village, two miles and a-half away, in 13 min. It then ran along an awful road to Five Mile House Ferry, which had to be crossed on the ferry-boat.

Here again the car demonstrated its superiority in striking fashion, for Mr. Gilbert drove it down a steep bank and straight on to the ferry-boat, and there pulled it up dead, to the amazement and relief of the bystanders, who fully expected to see the car plunge into the river at the other end of the boat. Would that the British public generally could have witnessed this little feat, which any motor-car driver of ordinary skill and nerve could perform; at present the average individual has no more notion of the extraordinary ease of management of automobile vehicles than travellers in the old stage-coach days had premonitions of the future developments of the railway. It is unnecessary to detail all the villages through which the car subsequently passed, but suffice it to say that it reached New York, a hamlet some eight miles from Boston, at 11.20 a.m., having been driven thirty-four miles, over roads bad in themselves, but particularly bad at this time of year, in 3 hr. 40 min., including numerous stoppages for the delivery of the mails. Later in the day the car did another round through outlying villages, which would otherwise have been minus a Christmas delivery of letters, and went through with entire success. Some further facts of interest may be quoted. On an ordinary day, to cover this long round in the usual way would have required five mail-carts, five horses, and five drivers, in conjunction with the train service, whereas a single motor-car with a single driver performed the journey single-handed, and in very much less time than would have been possible



F. Mason Good.

A STUDY OF GAME.

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with ordinary vehicles. It may also be added that the particular car employed had already travelled between 50,000 and 60,000 miles. After this convincing testimony he would be a bold man who doubted the efficiency or the durability of the modern self-propelled vehicle.

It may not be amiss, however, to refer to sundry other noteworthy performances which are germane to the issue. For example, the secretary of the Automobile Club is touring the country with a view to completing the arrangements for the forthcoming 1,000 miles trial in April next. Even with the vile weather, and still viler roads, of winter, his daily progression has been remarkable. On one day, for example, he rode from Birmingham to Manchester by way of Derby, Matlock, and Buxton, a distance of 102 miles. On another day he rode 90 miles, mostly through heavy snow, the route including the ascent of Shap Fell, which rises nearly 1,100ft. in ten miles. A later journey was from Edinburgh to Newcastle, a distance of 121 miles, which was accomplished in the night. Is it not sheer bathos to dispute the practical capacity of a motor-car when this sort of thing can be accomplished at this time of year over roads heavy with snow and mud, and often with a substratum of loose stones?

Let us consider further some performances that have been recorded during the past year in France, where the roads have a high average of excellence and are so deserted as to render automobilism at high speed all but free from danger. In the Bordeaux-Paris race M. Charron covered the distance (565 kilometres) in 1hr. 50min. 43sec. The Chevalier de Knyff rode the 2,291 kilometres in the Tour de France race in 44hr. 43min., and M. Antony covered the 170 kilometres between Paris and Trouville in 2hr. 58min., which is nearly thirty-six miles an hour; and these performances, it must be borne in mind, have been accomplished on the ordinary road, not on steel rails. Englishmen themselves on French soil have done by no means badly—the Hon. C. S. Rolls and the Hon. J. Scott Montagu, M.P., having both done wonders so far as their cars would allow. Mr. Rolls, on an 8 horse-power car, rode from Paris to Boulogne in 4hr. 12min.; 138 miles of the total of 144 were accomplished without a single stop, and, but for a puncture, which absorbed 12min. of time, the whole distance would have been covered in a continuous run, and in 4hr. even time. All the French competitors had 16 horse-power cars, and, of course, did better still.

If motor vehicles were but cheaper there would quickly be a battle royal between the cyclist and the automobilist on the question of which is the more enjoyable means of locomotion—the self-driving or the self-driven. In view of the fact that a very large percentage of cycle users could by no possibility afford a motor-car, and that many people still grumble at the price of cycles, there is little fear of the cycle ever being supplanted as a means of pleasurable movement and as an article of pronounced utility. No one, however, has been quicker than the cyclist to recognise the capabilities and future probabilities of the motor-car, for his training in traffic and familiarity with the conditions of country life have led him at once to recognise the future that lies before a powerful yet light and easily manipulated vehicle that dispenses with the horse and shafts.

As witness Mr. Joseph Pennell, a pioneer cyclist, who has been identified with the pastime for over a couple of decades, and who yet writes in the *Contemporary Review* in a strain that the most ardent automobilist could not excel. "There is no shutting our eyes any longer to the fact," says Mr. Pennell, "that the motor is the coming vehicle. The opposition of Parliament—with its desire to foster light railways, which ruin the roads, if they enrich contractors and company promoters and possibly members of Parliament as well—the silly restrictions of the police, and the County Council tramway and omnibus schemes for the moment interfere with this industry. But anyone of sense knows that in ten years the automobile will be as common as the horse is in the streets to-day, and the horse will then be as occasional as the automobile is now. It may be in less time, for the boom is almost upon us. The motor industry will probably have as chequered a career as the cycle, for exactly the same men are mixed up

in it. So far, it has developed here but slowly on the surface, because England is conservative, and also because the cycle makers, to protect themselves, naturally have done everything they could to retard it, at any rate until they should get rid of their stock. But anyone who travels in Great Britain cannot fail to note how, here and there, motor-cars, and not infrequently the inferior and second-hand ones, are taken over by motor-car companies, and are appearing in cities like Edinburgh and Newcastle, where you are carried almost as cheaply and ten times more rapidly and pleasantly than by tram or by trolley. Why any Government should allow more streets to be torn up for more wires, to be run above or under ground, is simply inconceivable, unless it is a source of profit."

The latest product of the German Daimler works at Caunstadt—not to be confounded with the English Daimlers at Coventry—is a 24 horse-power car built for Count Zborowski. Of course it is designed for racing purposes in the main, but its owner has entered it for the Automobile Club's 1,000 miles trial, so that its capabilities will be observable within our own borders. It is said to be capable of a maximum speed of forty-six miles an hour, and of twenty-two miles an hour up gradients of one in seven, which is as steep as anything that can be found on an English high road. Of course such speeds are impracticable of attainment over here, without collision with the police, but no doubt the car will be able to demonstrate by its hill-climbing capabilities alone what extraordinary efficiency it possesses.

A large number of English Daimler cars have just left for the United States, along with several Napier cars and motor-tricycles, in company of several well-known British automobilists. The object is to arrange a motor-car exhibition in New York, and no doubt some racing will also be arranged for the enlightenment of the American people. Automobilism is making great strides in the States, and a leading New York daily has declared that "the horse must soon follow the cow and the pig into banishment, not by legislation or by the force of public opinion, which has hitherto discriminated in his favour, but by the sheer pressure of economic inferiority." Prophecies of this description are becoming very numerous nowadays, and, however much they may be discounted by the unbelieving, they show with remarkable unanimity the way in which the wind is about to blow.

Our Portrait Illustration.

ONLY a few weeks have passed since our front page was honoured by the portrait of Lady Sarah Wilson, who has been doing daring work in South Africa. This week, in the picture of the Hon. Mrs. Goldsman, our readers see one of those noble women who, in the same country, are performing the holiest task that can fall to the lot of woman—that of nursing men who have been wounded in the service of their country. This daughter of Lord Peel, like her sister the Hon. Mrs. Rochfort Maguire, is the wife of one deeply interested in South African affairs.

A Dead Heron.

IT must be confessed that the picture which we here show is one to fill the heart of the ornithologist—or for that matter the more humble bird-lover—with sorrow. It is that of the heron, almost the first bird to find its way on to the game list, the ancient quarry of the falconer, lying dead in the water by the margin of the stream. In this case, however, execution seems to have been justified, and in a measure accidental. It took place at the time when the water was low, and in a district in which fish are absolutely the first consideration. The Avon Castle Hotel may be said to exist for the purpose of the angler.

When, therefore, it was discovered that the herons had made a clean sweep of the valuable collection of fish—rare and otherwise—in the stream and pond, and when it was discovered also that the beautiful birds had been wantonly destructive and had left large numbers of fish dead and dying on the banks, there can be little wonder that sentiment was in danger of going by the board. Yet, as a matter of fact, this heron was not shot but caught on a hook; the hook, which was baited with dace, had been set for the mighty luce or pike, which is death to young salmon and trout. The case, we imagine, must be almost without precedent.



A VICTIM OF A NIGHT LINE AT AVON CASTLE.

Bringing Game to the Gun: Partridge Driving.

PARTRIDGES are, no doubt, the most skittish to drive and most difficult to control of all birds, and, therefore, it is rather fortunate that their driving generally has to be done in a flattish country, where there is little to tempt them out of the way in which they should go. If it were a matter of driving them up hill and down dale, as grouse are driven over the moors, a very small percentage would come to the guns at all. It is a commonplace that the French birds are very useful for leading a drive, because they will come so steadily, even so stupidly on, as if they did not bother their heads at all about the guns. And though this is quite true, and very true that the birds are ready to follow their leaders, be they French or English, still it is probably over-stated in common talk, for partridges will drive quite well in many a country where there are no Frenchmen at all.

That which makes partridges harder than they should be to drive in those countries where the Frenchmen do not abound is the fact that it is just in those countries that partridge driving is a new affair. In the great partridge counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, and generally in the East of England—that is to say, generally where driving has been the vogue for some time—there are plenty of Frenchmen. It is the counties where the habit has been for generations to shoot partridges over dogs, or by walking them up that the Frenchmen are scarce; and when the old habit has been to shoot over dogs, you will have the greatest difficulty in making your keeper understand driving, the marshalling of the drivers, or the control of the birds at all. What is more, he is very likely to lay down the rule, with all the obstructiveness of his class, that partridges "won't drive" in that country, and, having said so, he will do all in his power to confirm the truth of what he has said, making no effort at intelligent comprehension of your intentions and wishes, and encouraging the like attitude in his beaters. The fact is that there is no country in which they *will not* be driven, though it is true that in some countries the men will and can drive them, and that in some countries they neither can nor will. But in the majority of cases we may take it, seeing that men are fairly well disposed towards each other on the whole, in spite of native obstructiveness and prejudice, the will is there, but the knowledge is lacking, the drilling is lacking, something is lacking.

In the first place, for successful driving it is to be postulated that you must have some partridges, in the second place that the country be not *too* hilly—this we think is essential—and in the

third place that it be not too windy, but it is not in any country likely to be always windy, so we may leave this temporary consideration on one side. Even in the flattest land of Norfolk and Suffolk, where drivers and partridges have been teaching each other driving for generations, the birds will not come properly on a very windy day. They will be tossed about anywhere as soon as they get into the air, going back over the beaters' heads when it is tried to force them up against the wind,



M. Hudson & K. Barnes

THE BIRDS ARE COMING.

and going anywhere, like autumn leaves, down the wind never to be seen again.

There is no question but that it is better, from every point of view, except that you do not have the added pleasure of seeing dogs work, to drive birds than to shoot them over dogs or walking. It is better for the shooter, for the average of the shots given by the driving method are far more sporting. In fact, it is very much the exception to get an easy shot, and that it is better for the birds is witnessed by the remarkable improvement and increase in the stock in every part of the country where driving has so lately been introduced that a comparison can be made between past and present stock, under the two systems respectively. It is obvious and necessary that improvement should result from the driving, but there is no method of proof so convincing as experience, and experience confirms the inference that might have been drawn from the

fact that, in driving, the old birds come first to the guns and are most frequently killed, leaving a young and vigorous stock, whereas in walking or shooting over dogs, the numbers of old and young in the bag are in the opposite ratio.

The fact that it is difficult to keep birds moving in the desired line over a hilly country gives a hint as to the difficulties likely to arise in partridge driving generally, and recognition of the difficulties implies, almost inevitably, the means of obviating it, so far as it is to be obviated. The tendency of the partridge seems to be to slink away in the line of least resistance. This is seen even when shooting the cream of partridge driving, over those fir belts that skirt so many of the fields in certain parts of Norfolk. The peculiar merit of partridge driving over these belts is that the birds are of necessity high in the air when they come over, and the guns can be put well back at a full gunshot, if that be wished, from the belt. But even here the birds show the same inevitable tendency to make for a weak place in the belt. Cunning guns know this full well, and if their place in the



M. Hudson & K. Barnes

line gives them any excuse for it at all will be always edging up towards the gap, on the chance that is really more than a chance, of a fair majority of the birds coming streaming through this gap. Now, what this gap in a fir belt is on a small scale a valley in a hilly country is on a large scale. The object to be aimed at, then, is to utilise these valleys, as far as may be, for the position of the guns. On the borders of Cambridgeshire, in the



MISTY DAYS ARE THE DEADLY ONES.

famous Six Mile Bottom country, the writer has often shot from a line of butts set across a valley in this manner. There is higher ground on either side, and the birds seem quite willing to be driven off the higher lands by outside beaters on the flanks, and so brought on quietly by the main beat coming along the valley.

But it is not always that a line of a valley will lie in the direction that it is convenient to drive your birds. Of course, you want to drive them somewhere, to some particular field or fields of roots, or even by preference a wild heathery place, and certainly by preference on your own ground rather than your neighbour's. The ideal, as it seems to the writer, of the conditions for driving is to have some such wild thick place lying nicely for driving them into. Before commencing the day's work, before the guns are posted, you will do well to have driven in any outlying ground into some field giving fair covert in the drive itself, so that these birds may come into the drive, but this must be done not more than half-an-hour or so before the drive proper begins, for the birds will not stay there indefinitely.

And if you can drive the birds into the wild heathery ground, or good root covert, over the guns, and get at them again to bring them back to their home ground over the guns again before they have had time to run together after alighting, they are very likely to come over in small parties at a time rather than in their big pack, and this is, of course, the consummation most devoutly to be wished. You will then go on driving these birds backwards and forwards as long as there are enough in the beat. Perhaps this should be the first consideration in planning the drive; that the birds should be driven somewhere definitely. You will have your second lot of beaters, if you are able to get two lots together (and two or sometimes three are more than twice or thrice as good as one, in the humble judgment of the writer), ready in waiting behind this definite somewhere, ready to come on at signal as soon as the drive before is over. The more quickly you can get your beaters at birds driven into a place of this sort the better. Even a freshly-turned plough-land is not a bad substitute for your heathery covert, for birds cannot run quickly together over the newly-ploughed land.

But, granting that to be the first consideration in principle, it is not always that you will find a pleasant and easy line of drive to your good covert. In a flat county you ought to be able to get your birds to go nearly anywhere you please, if

the weather be quiet, and perhaps your chief bother will be with any plantations in or flanking the drive. Birds are apt to turn off round the corner of these, if they flank the drive or over them (though this is less likely), if they come in the drive itself, and then being high in the air may get rather out of control. In point of fact, there should be no coverts of any height in the drive. For plantations on the flank it is well to have a judicious man with a flag at the far corner, only to show himself if occasion—such as birds twisting round the corner of the covert—demand it. It is well he should be stationed there quite early in the drive.

It is this kind of stationing of outposts, combined with the judicious advancing of either flank, that is the basis of good driving. Any valley running transversely to the line of the beat should be so guarded, and indeed any transverse line of attraction for the birds (*vide plan*). A keeper who knows the ground well, and has any powers of observation, will know the line of flight that the birds are likely to take at any particular point, with any particular slant of wind. It is scarcely necessary to say that, other things being equal, the birds will be inclined to fly down wind rather than against it, and the keeper will almost, as a matter of course, advance that flank of the beaters that guards the leeward side of the drive. Similarly the lower rather than the higher end of the beat, if the ground be sloping, will usually need to be a little in advance, the birds even, as has been said, inclining to the line of least resistance. Remember that what you want to do is to drive your birds, not to terrify them or make them lose their heads. You want to keep them pushing on, as it were, in the line of least resistance, so that it is generally far more farrorsome for a man who is guarding a side line of distraction, as we may call it, to show himself quietly, perhaps lift his hat and so stand than to shout and wave his arms. When the big body of the birds does rise up and go back over the beaters' heads, as will happen sometimes in spite of all precautions, then it may perhaps be useful to shout and wave flags. It can at least do no harm, for the harm is past mending, nine cases out of ten. We scarcely ever see birds turned again when they have resolutely risen in a pack and flown high back towards the beaters.

The keeper as director of the beat should always, if possible, have his line under control, so as to swing either flank forward at will according as he sees the trend of the birds' flight. Sometimes, indeed often, it happens that the guns, if posted behind a low hedge or in butts, can see birds trending away out of the line that are not visible to the keeper, and commonly the line of the first few coveys will give a clue to the line that the bulk of birds in the drive will take. It is, therefore, very useful for the host to have some kind of preconcerted signal, by whistle or by bugle, to the keeper, to inform him "birds breaking to the left,"



W. A. Rouche.

THE LINE OF SHOOTERS.

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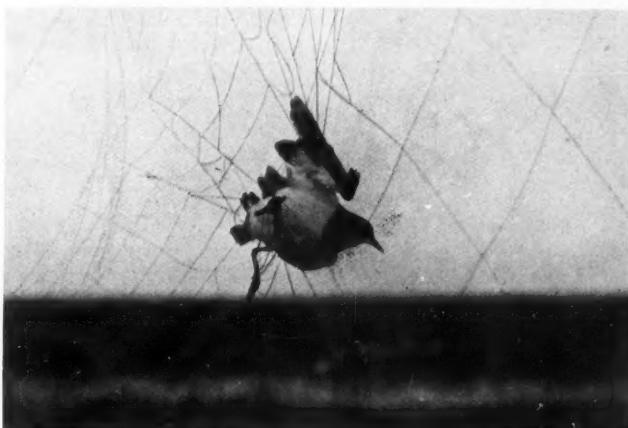
or "to the right," as the case may be, in order that he may swing forward his right or left wing accordingly. The use of the bugle has been rather derided until lately by our insular prejudice, but those who have seen the very much better discipline of the Continental beaters, performing their evolutions with something like military exactness to the note of the bugle (it is true that most of them have actually served in the Army), have discovered that we have something to learn in this regard from our Continental friends. Any means of communication in the field is preferable to the human voice, which alarms wild things much more than any other, even far louder sound. The extent of ground

that you will take in in a single drive will depend a great deal on its character. On bare ground, such as a short stubble, not half the number of beaters will be needed than would be necessary for thick roots, heathery ground, or fresh broken plough, and you will probably take in a larger stretch, say half a mile at the least, and possibly as much as a mile, if the ground have little cover. In partridge driving, as in other kinds of beating, it is a maxim that when the shooting is slow beaters should move fast, and slowly when the shooting is fast. Rather misty days are the deadly ones, for then the birds come on without seeing the shooter too plainly; but the mist must not be too thick, or the birds will not see more than one beater at a time, and are as likely to fly one way as another.



PLAN OF DRIVE.

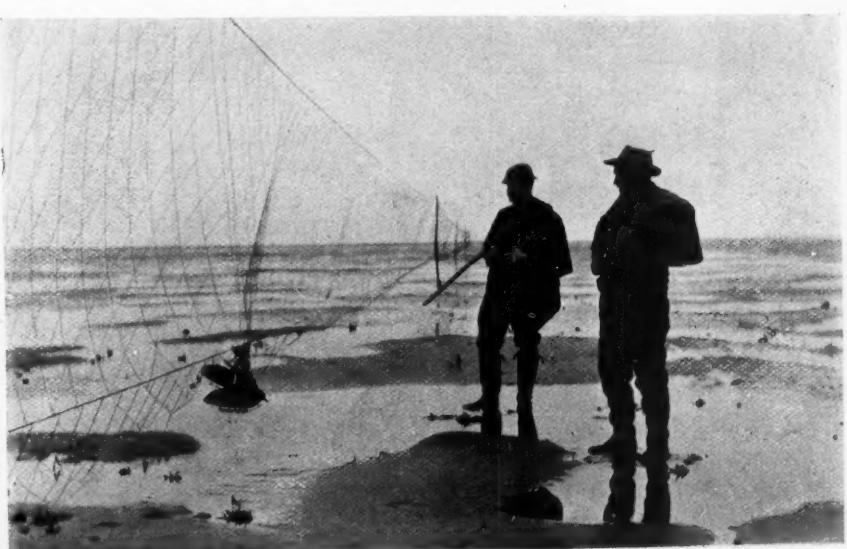
for miles along the shore to keep out the high tides and prevent them from flooding the land. The tide goes out for miles, and



HIS LAST FLIGHT.

on the seaward side of the big bank first we have what they call the samphire marsh, intersected with small dykes, and covered, not with the true samphire, but with the glasswort (salicornia). When we were down there at the end of October all this was brick-red in colour, having a very pretty effect; when green it is largely gathered for pickling. Next to this area is a big stretch of sand, and succeeding this vast mud-flats, a great place for cockles and shrimps, and the fishermen make "bush roads" by hawthorn bushes stuck into the mud at various distances to guide them to their "cockling" grounds, and to help them to avoid the dangerous quicksands in time of fog and storm. Here at Friskney, in Sea Lane, lives George Bray, the great fowler. He has been at it all his life, with the exception of a few years when as a boy he used to sail out of Whitby, and he is now sixty-six years of age, hale, hearty, and strong, always willing to tell the true sportsman and naturalist anything in his power, and with that keen sense of humour which seems to belong to those who spend much of their time in the pure open air, and helps them to tide over many a difficulty under which others less happily constituted would succumb.

The way of working the nets is as follows, and the photographs taken by my



AT BREAK OF DAY.

friend, Mr. John Kitching, will show this more plainly: Bray works four flight-nets, the longest consisting of eleven lengths, and each length of net being 36yds. long and about 6ft. wide, made of fine black cotton twine, with a mesh 6in. square. A thin strong cord runs along the top and bottom of each length of net to attach it to a thin strong ash-pole, which occurs every 37yds. 7ft. of the pole being above the ground and 3ft. below. The lower running cord is attached to the pole about 2ft. from the ground, so that the net "bellies" out; were it placed at its full stretch, the birds in striking it would often be thrown back instead of curling up in it in a hopeless tangle. As aforementioned the longest net consists of eleven 36yds. lengths—396yds. The nets, with care, will last about two years, and the cords five or six years. The poles will last a long time if wind and ice in winter high tides do not break them. The nets are set from September 1st to March 1st; they are placed at right angles to the sea, and much skill is required in placing them. What is known as the "darks" is the best time for the fowl—that is, dark stormy nights, with north and north-east winds, with high tides; still, quiet moonlight nights are bad, and few birds are caught when these conditions prevail. Of course many small birds get through so large a mesh as 6in. square without being caught, but the mesh has to be wide or seaweed would stop it at the high tides when the nets are partially covered with water, and the ice in winter would cut it. It also has to be made of thin twine or birds would see it and avoid it. Many are caught close to the top, as if they had been flying low, had seen

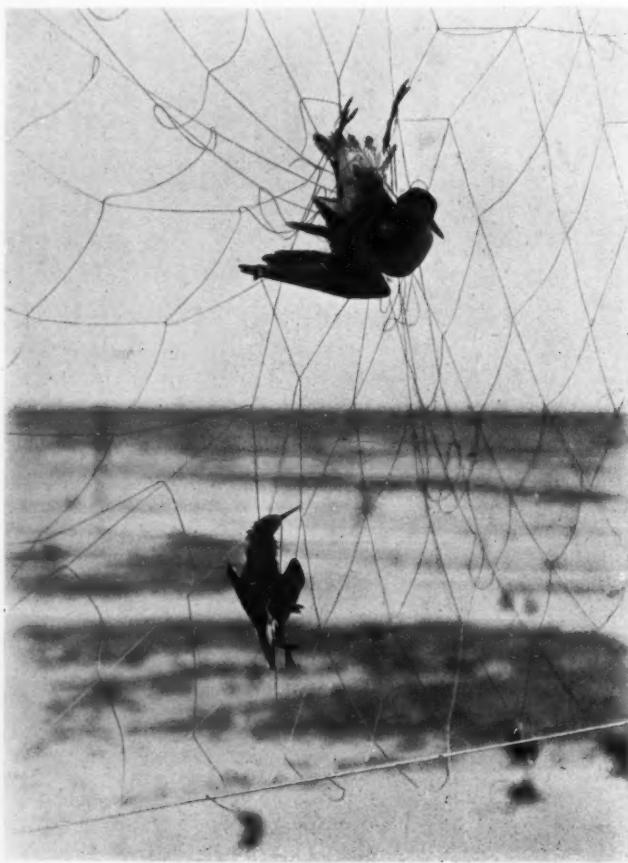


THE FOWLER AT HIS WORK.

ornithologists throughout the country. While in Yorkshire the lapwing is variously known as teuit, teäfit, peewit, and peuit, in Lincolnshire it is known as the "pyewipe"; similarly the oyster-catcher, known in Yorkshire as the sea pie (magpie), is known in Lincolnshire as the sea dick. The birds must not be allowed to remain in the net for long without attention, otherwise the gulls, carrion crows, and grey-backed crows soon tear them to pieces.

If the birds strike the centre of the net they have a better chance of getting caught than if they struck it near the poles, as in the centre it "bellies" out more, and forms a kind of pocket, in which they easily get entangled.

The biggest number of birds that Bray ever took out of one of his flight-nets, the result of one night's catch, was 150. Besides the gulls, plover, duck, various waders and larks that constitute the bag to a large extent, many other birds are obtained, such as cuckoos, corncrakes, nightjars, woodcock, etc., and occasionally some rarity, though in this respect the district cannot compare with some parts of our Yorkshire coast, which are in the direct line of the spring and autumn migration, and which are most rich in the number of species that visit them. Short-eared owls, generally known to wildfowlers as the woodcock



IN THE TOILS: GREY PLOVER AND DUNLIN, DEAD.

the net, and shot up to avoid it—but too late. With its being so thin, of course many big birds, such as cormorants, gannets, geese, etc., frequently go clean through, leaving nothing but a few feathers and a big rent, which has to be mended, to tell the tale. Big bunches of duck also will go through the nets. The birds are entangled up in every conceivable position. The nets are visited at daybreak, the birds put into a bag, and then they are turned out into a pen at the back of Bray's house, which, when we visited it, contained several species of the commoner gulls, grey and golden plovers, knots, dunlins, lapwings, and oyster-catchers.

There is a good sale for these birds alive and well to the London dealers, and also to the aviaries of the various



Colhoun. VILLAGE LIFE: WASHING DAY. Copyright

owl, because they generally come over about the same time that the woodcock do, are often caught in the nets, very often in the act of chasing some small bird, and both they and their intended prey are captured. It is ever a keen pleasure to the naturalist to see some phase that he has not beheld before, and this method of

working the flight-nets was the one thing in the art of capturing wildfowl, as practised in our islands, with which I was not familiar. There are other interesting things to be seen in the old-world village of Friskney, one at least of which I hope to refer to in COUNTRY LIFE before very long. OXLEY GRABHAM.



CHAPTER II.

MORE ENTERTAINING BECAUSE IT EMBRACES A PRETTY WOMAN.

I HAVE written as yet but little of my own family, and nothing of that member of it who is justly entitled to honourable mention, and a chapter to herself—my cousin, Lettice Charity. She came to live with us, the pretty orphan, when I was some ten years old, and grew to be the loveliest maiden in the Itchen Valley. My mother tended her as if she had been a sensitive plant of some rare and exotic species, but the reader may take my word that the girl was but wholesome flesh and blood, though fashioned more daintily than many a dame of quality. We had returned from Oxford to spend the Christmas vacation at Cranberry-Orcas, and Courtenay had not clapped eyes on Lettice for more than two years. My mother, who regarded Letty as a daughter, and whose ambition fed by her gentility was centred upon her two children, had placed the maid in a very select seminary—the honest word school was not genteel enough—a seminary, therefore, situate in the suburbs of Southampton, and presided over by a gentlewoman as prim and austere as the famous Miss Pinkerton of the Mall, Chiswick.

Mindful, doubtless, of this lady's precepts, my cousin, on greeting Courtenay, who had been accustomed to salute her as I did, with a hearty kiss, drew back bashfully from his extended arms and dropped him the demurest curtsey in the world.

"Why, Letty!" exclaimed my mother, with ill-advised reproach, "what means this coquetry?"

Then, with many blushes, Lettice surrendered her sweet lips, and Courtenay took full possession. Time had been more than kind to both of them; a prettier pair never kissed and sighed and yearned to kiss again. My foster-brother was just turned two-and-twenty. He was tall and slender, admirably formed, with wavy auburn locks crowning a fair white forehead, beneath which lurked the bluest and most mischievous eyes. Lady Blessington has recorded that he closely resembled Lord Byron, and the likeness was more than accidental, for Sir Marmaduke's mother was a Gordon, and of kin to the author of "Childe Harold."

"I've not kissed her for two years," said Courtenay, as though want were a synonym of excess. He had the grace to blush, however, and my mother blushed also and blinked confusedly, while Letty's cheeks were as scarlet as her lips, and her bosom heaved beneath her kerchief. A kiss, such as I have feebly described, is no ha'penny matter.

That night Cupid mixed metaphors on Courtenay's tongue.

"You marked her confusion?" he said, and I nodded gloomily. "Why, man, she is a link between the seen and the unseen, between heaven and earth, yet of the earth, the Lord be praised! A lily of the vale, planted by God's hand, to be plucked and cherished by the hand of man. The elements were her sponsors. Flame has touched her hair."

"And her heart," said I, more gloomily, but he marked me not.

"Water from Choaspes," continued the infatuated youth, "is no more limpid than her eyes, and Naples' Bay no bluer. The air has set her curls a-fluttering. And earth, the clay of Phidias, the marble of Carrara, has weighted her limbs, else, Jack, she would float from us and depart."

"She had better depart," said I, sulkily, "before worse mischief befall her."

"Mischief!" he repeated fiercely, gripping my arm; "what the deuce d'ye mean? Has anyone dared to—" and he paused, his voice trembling.

My heart ached for him, for her also, and the part that I was constrained to play was not to my liking.

"Courtenay," said I, "you love Lettice?"

"By God, I do!" he replied gravely; "I always loved her,

Jack, the sweet fair creature, but I never knew it till to-day—and, Jack—she loves me. There has been no speech between us, but between true lovers there is no need of speech."

"Courtenay," said I, "this is midsummer madness. The falcon mates not with the dove. If you are a man, if you honour your gentle breeding, if the affection you bear me is worth a pinch of snuff, this love you speak of must be fought and overcome. Come now, be sensible. You are absolutely dependent upon your father's favour. You cannot as yet support yourself, let alone a wife, and the babies that follow. Lettice has nothing but her face and her virtue; pursue this mad quest, and you will injure both."

"Not even from you, Jack, will I suffer such words."

I gripped his shoulder and continued: "You are but just of age, and Lettice has not left school. Pass me your word, now, that this unhappy business shall be pushed no further."

"And if I refuse?" he asked, hotly.

"I must speak to my father, and to Sir Marmaduke."

"You! A false friend!"

I met his angry glance and tightened my grip.

"Am I a false friend, Courtenay, or is it you who misinterpret friendship?"

His eyes fell, and, releasing his shoulder, I held out my hand.

"Your word of honour, Courtenay."

He placed his hand in mine, very reluctantly, and sighed.

"I pledge you my word," he said, slowly, "that I will respect the love I bear Letty—and you. I will keep away from the Abbey Farm for the space of one year—no more. Then I shall beseech her to become my wife. You may trust me, Jack."

"Ay," I replied, curtly; and that was all.

He spent that Christmas with a kinsman in the county of Dorset, and none suspected the cause of his absence. But Letty pined for him, losing colour and appetite. Watching her as she sewed by the fireside in the oak-panelled parlour, I could mark the change in the girl, and her mother marked it also.

"Do you know what ails the little lass?" she asked one bitter morning in January, when the snow was knee-deep outside, and the icicles hung a foot long from the eaves.

"'Tis the cruel cold," said I, evasively.

"I have heard her weeping in her chamber," continued my mother, softly, laying down her knitting and gazing anxiously into my face. "And I think, John, that, as you say, 'tis the cruel cold and naught else that afflicts her. Now"—her voice changed all of a moment, and I was amazed at the passion in her tone—"how could he come here, and kiss her, and hold her to his heart, and devour her with his eyes, and then depart without a word? How could he do it? 'Twas not like him." Then her voice broke, and she murmured, tenderly: "She is frost-bitten, sweet flower, frost-bitten."

Her distress moved me profoundly, and then—fool that I was—I blurted out the truth. My mother listened, a blush coming and going upon her smooth cheeks, and in her eyes a suffused light, a glamour spread by pride and pleasure. "Dear lad," she whispered, "dear lad, shall I live to call him nephew?"

"We may live to call him scoundrel, mother. We love him, both of us, but—remember—he is Sir Marmaduke's son."

In my witless anxiety to keep these young creatures apart, I could have chosen no surer way to bring them together than by aspersing Courtenay's character. My mother rounded on me with so pretty a display of temper that within five minutes I was braving the cold without in preference to the warmth, nay, the scorching heat, within. My ears were tingling as I clapped hat to head and strode into the blizzard. When I returned to the midday meal, my mother kissed me with a demure smile, and Lettice, who sat in the chair from which a scolding had driven me, turned aside a blushing cheek. This Delilah of a mother

had betrayed me! The maid's confusion was the sweetest thing to witness—and the most exasperating. At dinner, as luck would have it, my father said that he had had news from the Vale of Blackmoor, from his cousin-german, a famous breeder of cattle. In the tail of the letter was mention of Courtenay. During the mild weather that preceded the frost he had been seen cutting down the boldest riders in the Vale Hunt.

"The day will come," said my father, who loved to follow the hounds, "when Master Courtenay will see, mayhap, a wife and children on t'other side o' the fences. 'Tis so with me, I know."

Letty's cheek was pale, but her blue eyes sparkled.

"'Tis a gallant youth," continued my father, "and a reckless. A breaker of horses, and a breaker of bottles, and a breaker of hearts, I'll warrant!"

My good mother sniffed, and for the second time that day took up the cudgels.

"Thy warranty, Tom Charity, hath been called in question more than once, I mind me. This young gentleman's finger is worth the bones and body of a man I know who rides fifteen stone and more."

please, and could turn a phrase as neatly as his father—which is high praise. He was, indeed, Sir Marmaduke's understudy, aping his walk, his gestures, and his conversation. The baronet was a personal friend of Lord Melbourne, and Austin was already a member of Parliament. We have been told that the Prime Minister either was or tried to be a mere lounger—one who played with feathers and dandled sofa cushions when important issues were at stake; and Austin, when Sir Marmaduke's back was turned, affected the same indifference to all matters of moment, assuming (when with me) a lively interest in the nice adjustment of a cravat, and shrugging his shoulders at the mere mention of social and political reforms.

For a season his civility perplexed me. He would stroll across the park to the abbey farm and drink a dish of tea with my mother, besprinkling her with compliments soft as April showers. These falling on generous soil bred weeds, pride, vanity, and the like that choked reason, instinct, and a fair sense of proportion.

"A kind heart," said my mother, "is better than a handsome face. Mr. Austin has been misjudged in this house."



"The light filtering through the apple trees ana falling on their faces."

And then a laugh broke from pretty Lettice, and I could see that for her the sun was shining and all was well. Later, my mother tore to tatters my reproaches, and banished my frowns with kisses. Lettice, she said, only needed the assurance that the friend of her childhood was not indifferent to her. The child was a modest maid, and thought nothing of love and marriage; and so on and so forth—a madrigal of nonsense. I take credit to myself, because I remained profoundly convinced that the affair was serious and should be nipped i' the bud. How serious it proved the reader will soon be able to judge for himself.

During this vacation Sir Marmaduke's heir, Austin, spared no pains to make himself agreeable to me, a tenant's son. Austin was now five-and-twenty and a very fine gentleman if there be truth in the saying that fine feathers make fine birds. His coats were cut by Stultz, and Hoby was his bootmaker. You can picture to yourself a *petit maitre*, undersized, pock-marked, with a long, lean face, and sharp eyes set too close together beneath bushy brows. He had studied the arts that

"He talks sweetly of his brother Courtenay," sighed Lettice. I pricked up my ears at this.

"And he admires our little lass. He told me yesterday that he has seen at Almack's none to match her."

"He cannot be a judge of beauty," said I, angrily, "because I've seen him studying his own face in the mirror as if he were Narcissus' self."

And this speech begat a homily from my mother and a frown on the face of Lettice.

Being in my salad days I never suspected that these visits were paid to Lettice, and to her alone; but love, who may be blind, but is surely not deaf, roused a very tempest of jealousy and wrath in the breast of Courtenay, when the tale of this wooing by proxy—for Austin paid court to my mother—came to the ears of that impassioned youth. Lettice had returned to school when we met at Oxford, but my foster-brother assailed me bitterly, and for three days cut my acquaintance. Then his wits, for he was no fool, pricked his conscience, and he apologised humbly and entreated my pardon.

"I am not afraid of Austin," said he, smiling.

"I am," I retorted. "He's a hypocrite and a scandal-monger."

"Jack, I wish you had dusted his jacket for him."

"For what, Master Shallow? For his courtesy to my mother?"

"On general principles," replied the youth. "We thrashed him once, you and I, Jack. I shall never forget that day;" and he laughed heartily.

"Nor will he, Courtenay. His debt to us has been compounding interest ever since."

The months passed quickly, for I was making a business of work, and Master Courtenay of play. At this time he was one of the most popular men in the University, hale-fellow with all, saving the proctors and his dean. We met daily at the fencing school, but at other times our paths lay apart, and the company that he kept was too fine for a poor scholar. He would urge me again and again to share his purse and his pleasures; I declined both and stuck to my humanities.

My life at New College was drab-coloured, but the red came into it soon enough, and plenty of it.

The long vacation I spent in France and Spain with a sprig of nobility, who paid me handsomely for my services as coach and bear-leader. Courtenay was absent from Cranberry-Orcas. Lettice was left to bloom alone. I wrote many letters to my foster-brother during my tour abroad, and some he answered, but of Lettice not a word was said till we met at the Court upon the eve of his twenty-third birthday. If I had hoped that fashionable dames would surely put to flight his passion for a yeoman's daughter I was soon undeceived. I dined that evening at the baronet's table and Austin was present, a-glitter with trinkets and perfumed like Rufillus. Toasts were drunk in those days, though the fashion even then was on the wane, and Sir Marmaduke took wine with me, and gravely wished me a double-first. I think he was not ashamed of his godson, and doubtless surmised that the intimacy that had existed between Courtenay and myself was at an end. I confess that I thought so also, knowing well that porcelain and common crockery do not lie upon the same shelf.

"Tell us of your adventures, O Ulysses," said Courtenay. "What of the señoritas and señoritas—hey? Mark his sober face, Austin. I'll wager that his heart lies snug beneath that snuff-coloured coat; no woman has touched it."

"Speaking of señoritas," said Austin, "I'll swear you saw no woman so fair as Lettice Charity in your travels."

He looked as he spoke at Courtenay, and the pockmarks in his face seemed to deepen as if filled with bile and malice. My foster-brother blushed outright, as Austin added, "You agree with me, Courtenay?"

"Upon dev'lish few subjects, Austin, but on that—yes."

Sir Marmaduke held his glass of Madeira to the light of a wax candle.

"We will drink to all fair women," said he, gravely, and the toast was drunk standing.

Upon the next day we shot partridges, and the largest coveys were found upon the Abbey Farm. My father rode into the turnips, touched his hat to the lord of the manor, and respectfully invited the party to eat luncheon at his house; an annual invitation, formally made and as formally accepted. The meal was always served in our panelled parlour, for the dining-room adjoined the big kitchen, and was not deemed fit for the entertainment of fine company. The stout oak table was brought in, covered with my mother's finest damask and brightest silver, and then piled high with substantial viands, a mighty boar's head, a game-pie (my mother's pies were famous), a larded capon, and in pleasant contrast the lightest confections, trifles, tartlets, and the like, with many liquors and cordials, including a bowl of cold punch compounded from the recipe given to Sir Marmaduke by no less a person than the Prince Regent. After this meal but few partridges were shot.

My mother, I remember, wore her best dress, a "Paduasoy," and Lettice was bravely attired in an Indian muslin, that looked, so Courtenay said, as if it had been flounced and frilled by fairy fingers. I think the rogue knew that she had made the gown herself. She sat between him and Austin, opposite me, and I could see the knot of riband at her bosom rising and falling, even as the colour ebbed and flowed in her cheeks. Her vivacity enchanted the young men, but it alarmed Sir Marmaduke, for more than once I marked a frown upon his high, white forehead, and he answered absently some of my mother's questions, and ate but sparingly of the game-pie. My own appetite, one of the heartiest in the world, failed me as I tried to interpret these signals of displeasure. When the women withdrew, and the cordials circled, Sir Marmaduke's cold face relaxed, and our tongues began to wag freely. Courtenay punished the famous brew of punch, and raved indiscreetly of the white hands that served it. He assured my father that his niece was a beauty, toasted her again and again, and audaciously appealed to Sir Marmaduke to confirm and crown a youth's opinion.

"You sir," said he, "are a judge of wine and women. Have you seen a fairer creature?"

"She is very fair," said Sir Marmaduke; "*too fair*," he added, with emphasis.

"Ay," my father assented, "'tis a dangerous gift, but the little lass is good, and honest, and sensible. She hath heard more flattery to-day, I'll warrant, than is seemly, but 'twill not turn her head."

"Humph!" said the baronet, sourly; "I trust not."

Austin, however, looked sourer than Sir Marmaduke: What foul scheme was bubbling in his head as he sat at my father's board I never suspected then; later it was revealed to me. But he must have realised upon this particular occasion that the woman he desired—for I will not pollute the word love by mentioning it in connection with Austin Valence—was beloved by his handsome brother, and he guessed, doubtless, that this rival's passion had kindled responsive flames. I do know that he sought the baronet that same afternoon, and laid information against Courtenay, for Sir Marmaduke sent for me.

"You have spoken," said he, "more than once of the debt you owe me. That debt you are now able to cancel. Tell me, frankly, does Courtenay love your cousin?"

We were sitting in the library at the Court, and I can still recall the faint, musty smell of the leather volumes, and see the long rows and rows of books to which, as a scholar, I had free access. The room was eloquent of age and decay, for here were no new books in gay binding, no papers and magazines to prattle of the present, no flowers, no portraits even of youth and beauty. Nothing but hoary folios, quartos, and octavos, clad alike in soberest livery, servants all of them, ancient retainers—so to speak—set apart from use or abuse, rotting at ease in silence and seclusion. Not a living soul save I disturbed their peace, and Sir Marmaduke rarely entered the room. Perhaps he chose it for that very reason as the most fitting place for an interview that could not fail to be unpleasant. Moreover, my old friends on the shelves would certainly prick my sense of obligation to the man who had made me first acquainted with them. And who could urge the claims of love and the joys of to-morrow in a sanctuary of mouldering yesterdays?

As I paused in confusion, Sir Marmaduke laughed.

"You need not answer, John," said he, "for your honest face has betrayed you. Had you studied men as faithfully as you have studied books my task had been more difficult. So he loves pretty Lettice, and she, of course, loves him? Ha! you cannot deny it, and you have the grace to blush for both of them. And Courtenay's intentions are, doubtless, honourable?"

I have used a note of interrogation, but the inflection in his voice was rather exclamatory, and contemptuously so.

"I could answer—" I began, hotly.

"You need not answer, John. Your tongue is of little service to you or to me. I can read your face."

He must have read there dislike of a patron who had pinched patronage into tyranny.

"If you have no love for me," he continued, "you have an extravagant affection for Courtenay. I doubt whether man or woman is worthy of the sacrifice you made when you refused the sword I offered you and took instead a quill. That, however, is your own affair. I have sent for you; first, to satisfy myself in regard to the facts—which I have done; and secondly, to send a message through you to Courtenay and Lettice. I"—he paused and took a pinch of snuff, and I saw that the white fingers that encircled the box were as impassive and seemingly as lifeless as marble—"I need not recite to you, nor to Courtenay, my reasons—but they are essentially reasonable—my reasons, I say, for employing you as go-between. You will tell these foolish young persons that a marriage between them will sever the tie between Courtenay and me. His allowance of a thousand a year will be forfeited. His name will be wiped from my will. This is my message—that I beg you deliver at your earliest convenience. A personal appeal from Courtenay would annoy me excessively, and might provoke, you understand, a scene."

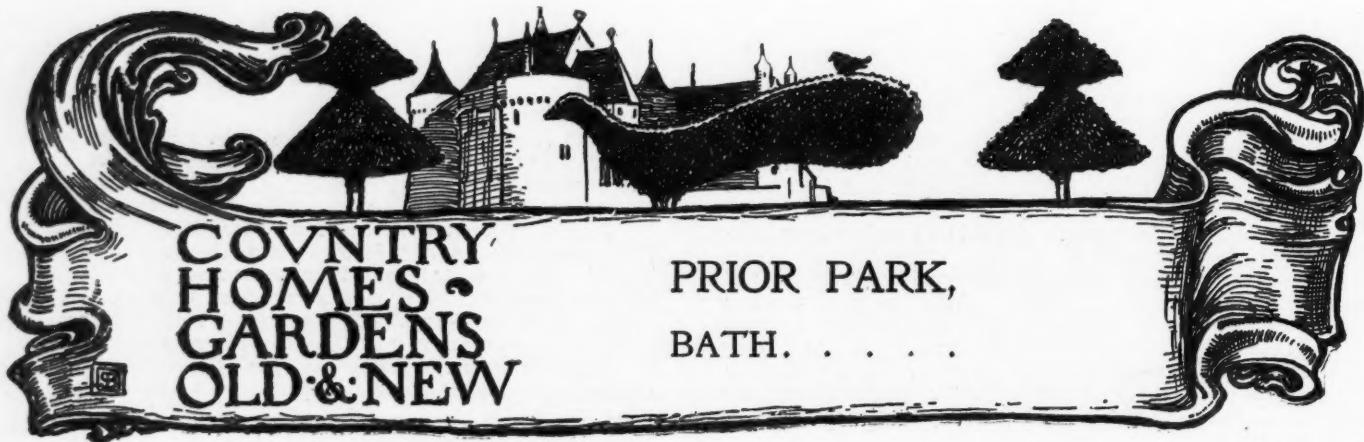
Then he rose—a stately and impressive figure—and bowed. The interview was at an end.

The butler informed me that Courtenay was not in the house; nor could I find him in the stables or gardens, but I met Austin, who said, with a sneer, that I should hunt my quarry nearer home. Then I suddenly remembered that this was his birthday, that his promise to me, concerning Lettice, had already expired, that, perhaps, at this moment, he was with her—a plighted lover. I unconsciously mended my pace and strode briskly along till I came to our orchard that slopes south-westerly to the Itchen. And here I found my suspicions verified, and two blushing fools, and a love-story that made my heart ache with pity and sealed for the moment my lips, for I felt like a serpent in Eden bearing in my mouth a deadly poison.

They stood before me with arms interlaced, the light filtering through the apple trees and falling on their faces.

"Well," said Courtenay, and he laughed gaily; "we have told you our story. Now, what have you to say to us?"

(To be continued.)



THE stately mansion we depict is one of the most interesting houses of comparatively recent date in England. It was the creation of a very remarkable man, whose personality impressed itself upon the City of Bath. Ralph Allen died in 1764, and the mansion which he so highly valued is no longer devoted to the domestic purposes for which it was built. It has now for a long time been a Roman Catholic College, and certainly nowhere in England are students more magnificently housed. There are buildings that seem more adapted to student life, perhaps, and there is nothing about Prior Park to remind

us of the halls and quadrangles of Oxford, or of places like Eton or Winchester; but it is a mansion of very stately character. Architecturally, it is a palace, with the great and imposing aspect which we find in such places as Blenheim and other creations of Vanbrugh. To describe it at length is unnecessary, because the pictures will show better than words can tell what are its features. The massive central block, with its vast Corinthian hexastyle portico and pediment, and the balustrade with which the structure is crested, is connected by arcades, with outlying pavilions or wings, which are now converted into the Colleges of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The situation is superb, and has dictated both the character of the house and the disposition of its glorious park. It stands at the head of the Vale of Widcombe, rooft below the level of Combe Down, and 400ft. above the City of Bath, over which there is an imposing prospect, closed by the distant height of Lansdown. Being thus upon a slope, a terraced formation became necessary, and nothing could surpass the excellence of the arrangement which will be seen in the pictures. The great curved stairways, with their statuary adornments and urns, and their exquisite balustrades, are remarkably good. The site is remarkable, and commands the whole range of the beautifully-wooded park below, with the exquisite Palladian bridge crossing the lake as a prominent note in the landscape. The gardens are very beautiful, but extremely simple, and the whole estate is preserved with traditional care. It may here be said that the house itself is the residence of the President of the College, and that the wing pavilions of Mr. Allen's mansion are devoted one to junior students, and the other to those more advanced, while such as desire to embrace the clerical state pass from the St. Paul's College to the President's School of Theology and Philosophy. In the great corridor of the house are memorial brasses to the Most Reverend George Errington, Archbishop of Trebizon, 1866, and to Bishop Clifford, 1893.

But it is now time to turn to the extraordinary man who built Prior Park. Ralph Allen appears to have been the son of one John Allen, the host of the Duke William, or the Old Duke, at St. Blazey, in



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THE GREAT STAIRWAY.

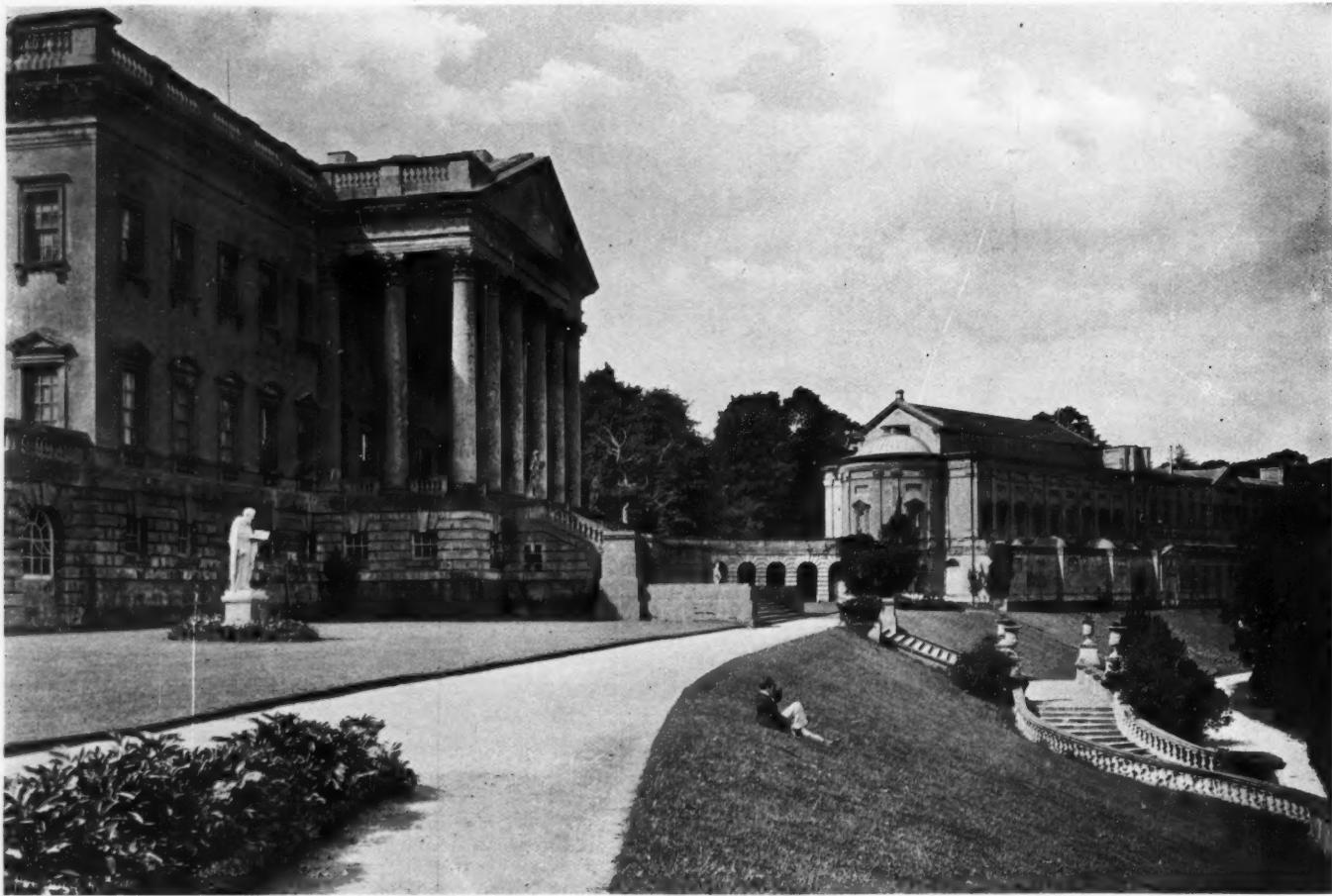
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GARDENS OLD AND NEW.—PRIOR PARK: A VIEW OVER THE CITY OF BATH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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LOOKING SOUTH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Cornwall. His grandmother kept the post-office at St. Columb, and it was the good fortune of the boy, while he was staying with her, to attract the attention of a postal inspector, who procured him a place in the post-office at Bath. The lad was evidently shrewd, clever, and intellectual, and was imbued with a spirit of kindness that afterwards made him famous. In the Bath post-office young Allen did himself credit, and, by detecting a Jacobite plot, won the favour of General Wade, whose natural daughter he afterwards married. In 1745 his enthusiasm led him to form a corps of Bath City Volunteers at his own expense. He very soon rose to be Deputy-Postmaster, and, having long been convinced of the fatuity of a postal arrangement which might send a letter from Bath to Worcester round by way of London, he set himself to devise a system of cross-country posts, which were officially approved. His scheme was adopted in April, 1720.

But Allen not only created the cross-country posts, but saw how he could turn them to his own advantage. He became a "farmer" of them, and it is stated that from 1720 up to 1764, when he died, his profits on the business were not less than £12,000 a year. At the same time, Allen was turning his attention to the development of the rich mineral resources of Bath, and, by opening quarries at Combe Down, he became a great employer of labour, and very popular in the locality. An ingenious invention, by which he lowered huge blocks of stone from the quarries to the canal, is still remembered. Thus did Ralph Allen become a prominent man in the West of England, known as the "Man of Bath." Once he was Mayor of the city; but he seems always to have ruled the affairs of the municipality, for there is a caricature representing him as the "One-headed Corporation."

Ten years after Mr. Allen had introduced his cross-country posts he set about the work of building his splendid mansion out of the stone which he quarried. His lofty ideas confounded the architect, John Wood, to whose taste Bath owes so much, but he was able to carry them out in the form in which we see them to-day. Here he enjoyed his leisure in beautifying the place and in laying out and planting the grounds. He had another house at Bathampton, and he built that picturesque tower known as "Sham Castle," which stands on a hill south-east of Bath.

We have so far seen only one side of Ralph Allen's character—that of the shrewd man of business. But the prosperous postmaster was filled with the spirit of munificence, and he freely disbursed of his plenty for the alleviation of the distressed. It is said that he never expended less than £1,000 a year in charity, and he did much for the Bath Hospital, and encased St. Bartholomew's Hospital, in



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THE FIRST STAGE OF THE GREAT STAIRWAY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

London, with stone. Allen was greatly esteemed by all his contemporaries. At that period the wealth, fashion, and intellect of the country tended largely to Bath, and Prior Park became the resort of many wits and writers of the time. Among those befriended by Allen was Fielding, who has typified his friend for all time as Squire Allworthy in "Tom Jones." In that book he describes Prior Park in glowing terms, speaking of the splendid outlook and the multitudinous trees, and only omitting the Palladian bridge, but extending his vision beyond the height of Lansdown. Fielding dedicated "Amelia" to Allen, and after the novelist's death his children were cared for by his benefactor. Pope also was a friend and admirer of Allen, and in the Epilogue to the "Satires of Horace" speaks of him in a couplet which is familiar to every ear:

"Let humble Allen, with awkward shame,
Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame."

The friendship at one time was interrupted, owing, it is said, to the poet's desire to foist Martha Blount upon the family at Prior Park, or, according to another story, to that lady's having demanded Mr. Allen's chariot to convey her to the Catholic Chapel in Bath. Whatever might have been the cause of the breach, it was made good, and Allen continued to shower favours upon Pope and his friends. One of these was Warburton, who married Geraldine Tucker, Allen's favourite niece, and who was appointed by Pitt, it is said at the instance of the philanthropist, Bishop of Salisbury. Pitt was an intimate friend of Allen's, and when the latter died he left the great statesman £1,000, "as the best of friends as well as the most upright and ablest of ministers that have adorned our country." Pitt, Warburton, Hurd, and other writers of the time, all speak of the splendid hospitality, the great natural ability, the simple manners, and



THE CARRIAGE DRIVE.

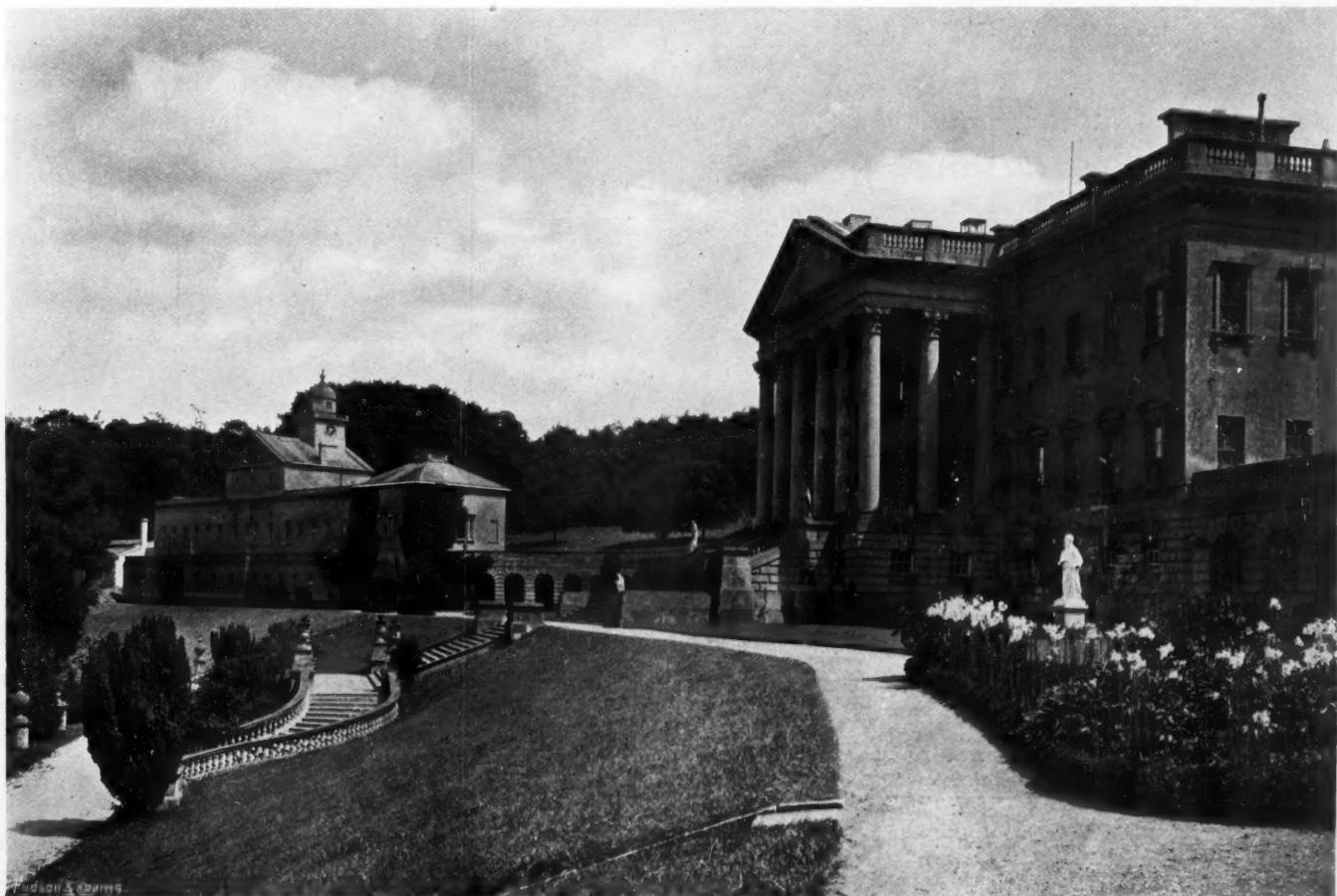
"COUNTRY LIFE."

the elevated tastes of Allen. When the philanthropist died, in 1764, he left one son, who became Comptroller of the Bye-Letter Office, and of whom comparatively little is known.

Such was the man who created Prior Park, and it is excellent testimony to his enlightened taste and his classic knowledge. He chose a fine situation and built a house which stood high among the palatial dwellings of the land, while he disposed the whole of the surroundings with a master hand to contribute to the effect.

BOOKS OF THE DAY.

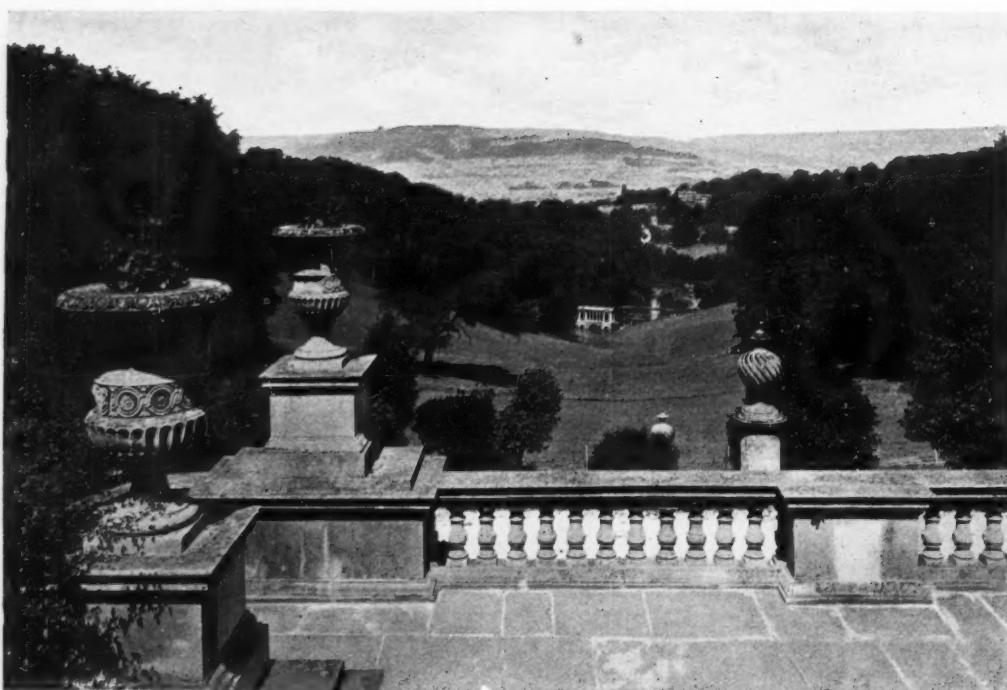
SHORT and Life in British Columbia" (Horace Cox) is the fascinating record of long visits paid by Mr. Baillie-Grohman and his wife to a country which was at any rate a very paradise of sport, and I do not hesitate to recount a personal experience to emphasise its charm and attractive



LOOKING NORTH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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PRIOR PARK: THE LOWER TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

power. The demon of influenza was threatening me ; his cold fingers seemed to be tickling my spine and limbs. My tobacco had that unmistakable and premonitory taste which is like the smell of a garden smother as it burns. But the tale of bricks had to be paid, and I took up Mr. Baillie-Grohman languidly, well knowing that, at the worst, his book would show some pictures of grand heads, of which indeed some have appeared in the pages of COUNTRY LIFE. For the life of me I could not relinquish it, for it is a book not only interesting, but full of inner meaning. What manner of man is this Mr. Baillie-Grohman ? He is a sportsman and man of letters, a combination none too common. In the excellent frontispiece you see him sitting in his study or his library, the habitation of a man who is at least comfortably off, surrounded by some wonderful trophies. You read the book, and you find that he has been content to brave hardship, and his wife has been not less content to bear it, for sheer love of sport on the one hand, and for the sake of the excitement of life in a mining camp also. That is the stuff of which hard Britons are made; it explains the performances

of men of our race which to foreigners are a sealed and mysterious book. That he should have been content to go often cold and hungry for the sake of the bighorn, and the wapiti, and the grizzly is readily to be understood. But more puzzling, except to Englishmen, is the adventurous spirit which kept him among the "toughs" in the mining camp in Kootenay, when Sprowle, the miner with a grievance, had threatened to take his life, and had actually emptied one cartridge of his Winchester at him. Mr. Grohman was never what they call B.B.—Busted Britisher—in Canada. He could clearly have gone home to comfort at his desire; Mrs. Grohman need never have endured his prolonged spells of absence from his base, need never have suffered from the tender mercies of a Chinese servant. They went through all this simply because they liked it, and they liked it because they had a simple overwhelming sense of humour. For the sport, it seems to have been of the very best. It was that, *plus* it is believed a good deal of experience on the Continent, which made Mr. Grohman the most critical as well as, perhaps, the highest of authorities on trophies. In some ways he must be a terror, for he has destroyed many cherished illusions, and he has upset the apple-cart—the phrase is classical now—of many a taxidermist, or, as I prefer to call him, animal-stuffer. If, for example, you



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THE PALLADIAN BRIDGE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Just now I mentioned a strong room, and that reminds me of a little book called "Tales of the Strong Room," by Mr. F. Denison (Digby, Long). It looks fairly solid, but it is of thick paper, and it contains 153 pages of loose print, apart from advertisements, and that is not much, but enough. This I say not because the stories are not interesting, for they are. It is really a collection of detective stories on new lines, showing how strong rooms may be utilised for purposes of crime, and there is just enough of it to while away an idle hour.

Very welcome, in the face of the now undoubted revival of agriculture, is a third and slightly enlarged edition of Mr. A. Dudley Clarke, F.S.I.'s, "Farm Buildings" (Batson). It is essentially a practical book, well supplied with lucid plans, from which the journeyman builder can work, though they are intended primarily for the agriculturist. It is written up with special reference to the latest statutes and to regulations of the Local Government Act. But the best of all advice is contained in the first preface. It is in effect this. Perfect buildings are not the beginning and the end of the whole argument. It may not pay to build or to improve, and if it does not, save on exceptional estates, it is an economic sin to do either. But if you do build you must do so well, soundly, and with economy; and Mr. Clarke will show you how to do it.

The next book on my list is approached with expressions of regret, rather than apology, to Mr. Neil Wynn Williams, and to the reader. Pressed by many books of importance, I have left his pretty "Greek Peasant Stories" (Digby) too long unread. Now I hasten to say that they have in them a note of pure sweetness. The book might be called Arcady restored. It is the original Arcady in which Xenophon, and Aristides, and Demetrius, and all the rest of the friends of our youth, live and move and have their being, sail their caïques over the waters of the Greek Archipelago, love and steal and murder and traduce one another. Mr. Wynn Williams can write, too, and he has a keen idea of sport—witness these two passages, the first of which describes the burning of a caïque: "We watched the thick smoke grow more furious in its rush to the blue heaven above. The flame was coming—I could swear it. They were calling on the Saints. The heat was drawing to us. A few more feet, and we could go no further—there was the sea there. But we must go. 'Here!' I said roughly to the woman; 'here!' the casks. Take one under each arm, and jump.' She hesitated on the gunwale—I pushed her. The damned one saw her fall; he picked up two casks, and he also jumped into the sea. 'Go!' I said to Alexis and Achillaki. 'Go!' I said to Xenophon, taking the tiller from his hand. I was alone on board with the goat. The caïque travelled gently on; she rode the waves lighter, but the pitch bubbled in her seams. I could see them, the others, floating on the sea, a cable's length away in my wake. The caïque travelled yet further—I lashed her tiller to keep her to her course, and away from those others. It was done, and I, too, jumped into the sea with a cask under each arm. I shut my eyes as I fell into the cold water, and went down beneath its surface. I sank, very deep it seemed to me, and then I came to the surface again, to drink in the delicious air, and fall and rise with the waves. When the salt water cleared from my eyes I could see the caïque sailing on and on; I could hear the goat faintly bleating its life away. I and those others, we drew near to one another. Fear made us sparing of our words, though we felt

not alone till the sun-dimmed flames shrivelled up the white sails of the hurrying caïque; till the water around us had swallowed up her timbers; till the last gust of smoke had gone with the wind to the land. Then we were alone with the ocean and silence. Flesh is weak, the sea strong and great, the land far away—so we told one another. God is good, God is strong and great and close at hand—so we told one another, and called upon the Saints. But we grew weary with waiting, silent from exhaustion. We were to die, we thought. The blood mounted to my head; it felt heavy, and the sun sent a buzzing into my ears. I scarcely knew where I was. My temples throbbed; I could hear them beat. I dipped my head into the sea; that would ease them. But no! the pulsation was firmer, more distinct. Again I bent my head towards the sea, and louder beats the throb; it beats to my heart. I look up; I look around; I listen with covetous ears. And those others; they have heard something.

There is the noise of an engine that comes through the silence that lies on the sea. But where is it? Already it seems to have died away. You have seen the great guns fired, Afendi! One moment, there is the peace of a still air; the next, a great smoke-cloud bursts into being, and gathers into its belly the air around it. Thus grew a black cloud at the end of the cape, and where it hung, low over the water, was the black prow of a steamer striking the blue waves into a white foam. It came round the cape—did the steamer that saved us. Was it chance? Oh, no, Afendi." Truly a fine passage; and the next tells its own tale: "Seconds fly away from the present to the past, and Spiro is ready again, and climbing upwards. But this time his progress is slower, for the undergrowth is more dense. The arbutus and the ilex reach above his head, so he follows a sheep track on its roundabout course. Very soon he quits this for yet another equally erratic, and similarly garnished with strips of dirty wool torn from



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THE SOUTH COLLEGE.

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PRIOR PARK: THE NORTH COLLEGE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

hungry bellies in search of the young and succulent shoot. The forest becomes permeated with a network of these paths: it is easy for him, by taking advantage of here a one and there a one, to keep to his upward course. He does so, and is rewarded by seeing woodcock, though out of range, flying betwixt the tree trunks on his right and left. A little further, and a sudden choice of many birds is offered to him—which shall it be? Ah! that one. Good! he has shot it below the wing, and it hurtles to his feet, with a fleshy thump that brightens his eye like a tumbler of raki on a hot day. He picks it up. The cock's great eyes are glazing fast—they will hunt no more by night. It is as it should be, thinks Spiro to himself. He reloads, and continues the game of hide-and-seek with renewed ardour. He will not tire of it till the evening shadows creep out to spoil the sport, when he will return to his village with a full bag and a thirsty throat. Such is a peasant's 'shoot' in Eubaea. Of other game that falls to his

gun there is the woodcock's cousin, Jack Snipe; there is the quail in April and May, and again at the end of summer; there is the red-legged partridge in September and October; and last, but not least, there is the wild boar (or is it strayed pig?) that in the winter-time, when the white snows lie deep upon the mountains, comes down for a good 'long drink' at the village stream. Piggy's trouble is Baba's opportunity, who, wishful to show him every attention, is upon such occasions sometimes tempted to lay aside the brass-bound gun for the military rifle and persuasive bullet. Of birds of prey Baba will shoot the eagle, for he bears him an evergreen grudge on account of his lambs; and sometimes a hawk (he his family what it may) when he flutters his dovecote. But of the vulture he takes no notice, nor of the many bright-feathered birds that sit voiceless over Eubcean field and forest. He makes an exception, however, in favour of the gold-streaked *siko pouli* (fig-bird), that, nourished upon ripe figs, falls to his crafty gun so often as it comes within range upon a luscious robbery bent. At the hare Baba Spiro shoots straight, and also at the fox—when the fox will let him do so."

GARTON'S SEEDS.

SOME time ago reference was made in COUNTRY LIFE to the important work done by the Messrs. Garton of Warrington in the way of producing new breeds of wheat, barley, oats, and grasses. It promises to accomplish so much that no apology is needed for returning to the subject which has a very lively interest for every consumer of bread. The story of John Garton and his brother is a striking example of successful perseverance in what was for years a discouraging pursuit. They are the sons of a Lancashire grain merchant, and began their experiment in 1880. Their aim was the cross fertilisation of cereals. It will be news to some that wheat has been bred in and from its creation. Nothing else is possible. The male and female organs of the young plant—the pistils and stamens—are encased within its green sheath, and the ear does not shoot forth until union has taken place. By this provision of Nature it therefore becomes impossible for the plant to be invigorated by what in animals we should call new blood. Mr. Garton entertained the belief that it could be achieved by artificial means. Stated briefly, his plan is to open the sheath while the flower is still immature, remove the stamens, and introduce at the critical moment the male organs of that plant which he desires to use in crossing. The reader will easily imagine what delicate manipulation, care, precision, and microscopical research were employed before this was achieved. After he had succeeded in marrying different varieties and obtaining hybrids the work was only begun. Those who have tried to develop a new chicken, sheep, retriever, or any other animal, are well aware of the patience and discrimination required to go on breeding so as to fix the type. To do that kept him engaged for many long years, as the second cross consisted of variegated mongrels from which passable parents had to be selected. Some idea of the labour involved may be gained when it is said that for the purpose of these experiments the world was ransacked for seed. The brothers got together more than 350 varieties of wheat alone. They include 36 English, 25 German, 26 French, 4 Russian, 15 Hungarian, 104 Greek, 65 Italian, 60 Indian, 12 Australian, 2 Japanese, and 45 American. From a miller's point of view the chief defect of English wheat is an insufficiency of gluten. To make the best bread it has to be mixed with foreign. Ultimately the defect was remedied by crossing the old Lincoln red wheat with *Triticum spelta*, the wild wheat of Southern Asia. The characteristics of the hybrid are that it is rich in gluten, it ripens earlier, and, like the parent weed, it adheres firmly to the chaff and is not liable to be blown out by the winds that too frequently ruin our English harvest. As a wheat it is superior to anything hitherto produced on any foreign soil.

Of oats over a hundred varieties were collected—20 British,

12 German, 10 French, 7 Russian, 6 Hungarian, 6 Greek, 8 Italian, 12 Indian, 8 Australian, 14 North American, and 2 Chinese. Here, again, it was from a weed—the Chinese oat grass—that the improvement of our native species was obtained. The hybrid is a really remarkable plant. As Dr. Somerville's experiments at Cockle Park have shown, its produce is very much greater than that even of Scotch white oats, which, with identical treatment, gave 39 bushels to the acre, as compared with its 56, and only 24cwt. of straw to its 34cwt. It has also to be noted that the berry perpetuating this characteristic of the weed is produced without husk or shell, and is prevented from shedding by the chaff. Mr. Garton has treated barley to equally good purposes. Its great defect was due to its deterioration by in and in breeding. The best malting barleys have only two rows of seeds, but there are four other rows of infertile florets, showing that originally there must have been six seed rows. Mr. Garton has succeeded in restoring to fertility these atrophied rows, thus adding immensely to the productive power of the barley. By combining fescue and rye and the indigenous red clover with the broad-leaved red he has produced new breeds of grass and clover that possess immense advantages over the old, and his operations, with results equally beneficial, have been extended to mangolds and swedes. It would be superfluous to dwell upon the immense value of these experiments. Not only do they point in themselves to an enormous extension of our food supply, but they open up an immense field to the scientific botanist of the future. In the opinion of those best qualified to judge only the fringe of the subject has been touched. The Messrs. Garton are but the pioneers, and, as is always the way with discoveries, those who follow, and who naturally begin where they leave off, that is to say, with all the advantages arising from twenty years of continued and intelligent study, will find there are many directions in which the same principles may be applied. Looking into the future, it is not too much to hope that at no distant date we shall have not only new plants but new foodstuffs. It should be added that the results attained so far have been subjected to the scrutiny of the most competent experts, and have been thoroughly discussed by them in the leading agricultural journals. The names of Professor McAlpine, botanist to the Highland and Agricultural Society, Dr. Robert Wallace, Professor of Agriculture at Edinburgh University, Mr. Alfred Smetham, consulting botanist to the Royal Lancashire Agricultural Society, and Mr. James Macdonald, all of whom have testified to the importance of these discoveries, are a guarantee in themselves. Better still, those practical farmers who have made trial of the seeds are the loudest in their praise.

Captain C. J. Radclyffe's . . . Clumbers.

STONEHENGE once wrote, "Since the general use of human beaters instead of canine in the *battues* which are now in fashion, the spaniel has been at a discount except for rabbit shooting, and for beating small spinneys for pheasants before the commencement of the regular season." I give the sentence as it is printed in the third edition, with its mistakes, and I here record the opinion that much as Stonehenge knew of the interior economy of the dog, and of the performance of some breeds, particularly greyhounds, in the field, he was as far from being an all-round sportsman as from being a French scholar. We are all agreed now that the word *battue*, which has

no accent, is misleading, and vulgar, and worthy to be abolished. Somehow or other it carries with it the old delusion which dies so hard and rises again so often, of the sportsman blazing away as fast as he can with the help of a loader and two or three guns into a huddled mass of helpless pheasants. Still, there is a certain amount of truth in the sentence. The tendency for the man to grow more and more and for the dog to grow less and less is not to be denied. It is, therefore, no common pleasure to look upon the capital pictures which represent Mr. C. J. Radclyffe's team of working Clumbers and to know that they are worked regularly during the season, not merely in hedgerows and spinneys, but in the great woodland tract known as Bere



W. A. Rouch,

OFF TO THE WOOD.

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Wood, which was described in a recent number of *COUNTRY LIFE*. Moreover, they are no mere hobby or fad; nor are they kept up because, although the work might be done as well with the help of men, it is pretty to see dogs work. They are kept for practical reasons, and because in Bere Wood, with its close and thick undergrowth, it would be impossible to flush half the birds or to bring them to the gun in a workmanlike manner without dogs. In a word, they earn their living.

Almost every sportsman has a cherished niche in his memory for some particular dog with whom he has passed many a happy day in the fresh air, the rain, and the sun, never coming back empty handed. With stories of such dogs the talk of the gun-room and of the country house smoking-room abounds; and it is the pleasantest talk in the world to those who love dogs. What sportsman does not remember stories of Blot, the old retriever bitch, who was as a familiar spirit to her master; of Snipe, the setter of preternatural sagacity; of Don, the blue-blooded pointer, and of his inimitable steadiness in his lifetime? Being dead, these ancient favourites are held in pious memory, and their virtues are pleasantly exaggerated while their vices are forgotten. They are canonised as canine saints, and the dogs of to-day are not held worthy to be compared to them. Now I, Caniculus, who write these words, worship the memory of two canine saints of whom one ought to have been a Clumber, although in fact he was but half of a Clumber, while in the other half some dozens of strains were happily blended; but the other was a Clumber and a beauty. Of the two the first, albeit one of the ugliest dogs ever born, proved the better and the cleverer. He saw the light first in some fairly well-known livery stables in Pembroke Street, Oxford, and his mother's owner, oddly enough, hailed from that very sporting county. The Duke of Newcastle himself never possessed a bitch of blood more blue than that which crossed in the veins of the mother of Boy—for so we called him later. Neither the inhabitants of Africa, nor the English—the two races, *par excellence*, of whom it has been said that they owed their eminence to mixture of blood—represented so many families and breeds as must have been collected together in Boy's father. Even to me, untutored as I was in the

dandies for example, the young puppies are totally unlike the adult dog in point of colour. But, of course, Boy never did change to the proper colour. He remained auburn, suffused with a rosy tinge, to the end, and my friends called him the "pink dog," on the same principle which they follow in calling a clerical friend of mine the "pink parson" to this day.

A good horse, however, is never a bad colour, and the same observation is true of a good dog. Boy, trained by a



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EAGER FOR THE FRAY.

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brother who had talent in that direction, turned out absolutely the best dog for a modest family shooting that ever was known. He got to know every hedgerow and every thicket, he picked up by his native wit that wonderful knack of fetching a compass round hedge or brake so as to flush game towards the shooter, his mouth was as soft as a woman's hand in a suède glove, the longest day did not tire him, and he would swim further in pursuit of game than any dog I ever saw. In later life he became somewhat opinionated and determined to do things in his own way or not at all; but that is the way of Clumbers, and you may regard it from two points of view. Either, in the interests of general discipline, you may compel your Clumber to bustle through a tangle in which he tells you there is no game, in which case you must begin early and steel yourself against the look of pitying resignation with which he will emerge, or you may make up your mind to rely upon the dog—in which case you will save waste of time and make the bigger bag. The latter was the course which we followed with Boy, and also with great success, until at last he fell a victim to his own cleverness. Carelessly tied up, so that the end of his collar-strap was not through the loop behind the buckle, but within his reach, he got loose one night and went poaching with a friend. He perished, as many of our dogs did, under the wheels of a train, for dogs love the cuttings of a railway, because they are the haunt of game. That, in passing, is why platelayers are such experts in the amusing little arts which go to make the complete poacher. Boy was succeeded by Molly, a beautiful Clumber bitch, and of great cleverness. Her fame was never quite so high as that of Boy; but that was mainly because she came later in my shooting

career. Really she was every whit as good as Boy, save that she tired sooner, and in some respects she was better. But what will you? One cannot be canonising dogs every day. Somehow or other Molly's life was cut short, probably again by the Juggernaut train. If she had been the first saint I should remember exactly; as she was merely the second, I, to use an Americanism, disremember.

That is all—outside all the books worth having that have



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THE PICK OF THE PACK.

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ways of Clumbers then, it seemed strange that this boisterous and fluffy creature, self-coloured all over, and of the hue which boys call "carrots" or "ginger"—artists call it auburn—should be expected to develop the markings of a Clumber spaniel. But I refused to play the part of doubting Thomas for two reasons—firstly, my friend was a man of honourable nature and had no temptation to "pull my leg" over a deal, since he was giving away the puppy; secondly, I was aware that in some breeds,

careers. Really she was every whit as good as Boy, save that she tired sooner, and in some respects she was better. But what will you? One cannot be canonising dogs every day. Somehow or other Molly's life was cut short, probably again by the Juggernaut train. If she had been the first saint I should remember exactly; as she was merely the second, I, to use an Americanism, disremember.

ever been written about dogs, and some more or less clear notions about sundry famous show-bench dogs and their pedigrees—that I know about Clumbers. But to have known two such dogs on really familiar terms is a liberal education in Clumber nature; and, although I have never had the luck to shoot over such a noble team of them as that which Mr. Radclyffe can show, I can readily understand how beautiful a sport it must be. Looking back at the pictures of the Bere Wood shooting published in COUNTRY LIFE on December 16th, and at the one in this number entitled "In the Big Wood," where one gun stands with his loader, I can fill in the background of the picture without straining my imaginative powers. The gun in the ride is Count Canisy, a guest from the Continent, to whom a beautiful stand has been given. Away in the background are the beaters advancing in line, and I cannot help thinking that Mr. C. J. Radclyffe is with them to watch his beauties work, and to take a stray shot now and again. To and fro, rarely more than 30yds. in front of the beaters, heavy in movement, but patient and unerring, the Clumbers search the thick undergrowth. No shouting is needed for them. They know their master and they trust him, and they look to him for guidance. He gives it to them with a wave of his arm, and when a shot is fired in their immediate vicinity they either down charge or come clustering round him. If necessary they will retrieve to a nicety, and in searching out a wounded pheasant they are, especially the older ones amongst them, not to be beaten. No

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WAITING TO GO INTO COVERT.

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any other flowering tree and shrub. A Dutch Medlar on the lawn outskirts is infinitely more beautiful than some seedy Conifer. The Medlar is picturesque in growth, handsome in leaf, and burdened with white flowers in spring, whilst its brown fruits are wholesome and agreeably acid in flavour. We lately read an excellent article by that good fruit grower, Mr. Bunyard, who, in discussing upon the subject of "Fruit Trees for Ornament and Beauty," alluded to the Quince: "If there is a pond or damp corner on the lawn a Quince would thrive on the banks of the water and hang gracefully over the pool, and such a

tree is very beautiful, either in June with large white and blush cupped flowers, or in October with its golden fruit, which the cook will recognise for various purposes. If the garden be of sufficient extent, a Black Mulberry should be planted, if possible a low standard, as that form is less liable to breakage when the tree gets old." Continuing, reference is made to the beautiful Crab, and no group of deciduous trees is more exquisite in form, leaf, flower, and fruit. "For early spring blossom and autumn fruit combined there are no better subjects than the John Downie and Dartmouth Crabs. The former is best as a standard, as its numerous long oval fruits cause the tree to weep, and when ripe, in September, they present a rich appearance, as the tree bears profusely. The Dartmouth Crab is better as a pyramidal tree, when it should be pruned hard for two or three years, and then be allowed to extend itself. The fruits are large, and assume a rich dark Mulberry colour when ripe, covered with a dense bloom. They are handsome on the trees, as also when used for table decoration."

THE APPLE

is without rival amongst ornamental trees. If only its beauty consisted of the pink-tinted flowers, the tree would be worth grouping freely, but the Apple is picturesque in growth, and in autumn ruddy-cheeked fruits hang profusely upon the rugged branches. Mr. Bunyard says: "Standard trees of the weeping sorts are most



W. A. Rouch.

IV THE BIG WOOD.

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living thing, neither pheasant crouching in dead leaves, nor woodcock squatting almost scentless under the holly, nor rabbit squatting paralysed with fear in its form, escapes those sensitive pink noses. Docile, patient, keen-scenting, and above all not too fast, Clumbers form an ideal team for a shoot such as this, and Mr. Radclyffe is indeed well advised to keep them.

IN THE GARDEN.

FRUIT TREES CONSIDERED FOR THEIR BEAUTY.

IN some recent notes fruit trees were considered, not from a commercial aspect, but for their beauty as trees to adorn the garden, even the pleasure ground.

We hope to encourage this phase of fruit culture, not merely the regarding of the Apple or the Cherry as trees only for the kitchen garden or some quarter restricted to fruit alone. A pleasant picture is a beautiful lawn garden in which Plum and Quince, Apple and Pear play their good part, as much as the Philadelphus or

Gascoyne's Scarlet Seedling forms a perfectly shaped tree, lovely in its profusion of blossom, and striking when its scarlet fruits are ripening in October. If the boughs are spur pruned they carry festoons of fruit, which, in the South at least, colour to perfection, making them available for decorations in a high degree when gathered, and striking objects upon the tree. Cox's Pomona also makes a fine lawn tree, and Peasgood's Nonsuch produces very large noble flowers. The three kinds named have fine bold foliage, and if a fourth should be desired Stone's or Loddington Seedling, with its large foliage and handsome fruit, may be added. The dessert sorts, although smaller, are not so well adapted for our purpose; moreover, they are more readily affected by blights and mildew, and they assume a ragged appearance. There are a few Pears which produce a profusion of large pendant flowers, which, with a suitable background of taller trees, seem worthy of a garden space. Jargonelle, Catillac, Beurre d'Amanlis, and Pitmaston Duchess have ample foliage and produce a prodigious number of conspicuous white flowers." If any readers desire further information as to planting fruit trees upon lawns, we shall, of course, be pleased to give it in our "Correspondence" columns. It is a subject that deserves attention, because little thought about in the past. There is no

reason whatever why profit and beauty should not go hand in hand. Many of the Pyruses, Cherries, and other groups of trees not grown for their fruit beautify the landscape; why not then those kinds from which also an abundant harvest may be reasonably expected.

SHRUBS, INCLUDING CONIFERS, TO FILL FLOWER-BEDS IN WINTER.

We were lately looking through some volumes of the interesting journals of the Royal Horticultural Society, and came across a list of Conifers and shrubs for "winter and spring bedding." Patches of bare soil heaped up, graveyard fashion, are not pleasant to look at for several months in the year, and, as we have recently pointed out, winter has its treasures as well as any other season. The writer thought this list might be of great value to those who wish their gardens to be bright and interesting in winter, and variegated shrubs carefully selected provide rich and decided colouring. But they must not be chosen recklessly or planted thickly, else will the effect be spotty and unpleasant. Of variegated shrubs the selection comprises the following:

Aucuba japonica maculata—the old *Aucuba* of gardens.

Buxus (Box) argentea variegata. *Buxus (Box) aurea*.

Buxus (Box) japonica aurea.

Euonymus radicans. *Euonymus japonicus aureus variegatus*.

Euonymus japonicus aureus marginatus. *Euonymus japonicus albus*.

Eurya japonica variegata. *Eleagnus pungens*.

Eleagnus maculatus aureus. *Erica vulgaris aurea*.

Hedera (Ivy) arborea argentea variegata. *Hedera (Ivy) arborea aurea*.

Hedera (Ivy) arborea chrysophylla.

Of this selection the *Euonymuses*, *Eurya*, and *Eleagnuses* are suitable for favourable situations only, being rather tender.

We think that there is little occasion to plant anything tender when the noble Tree Ivies give rich and lasting colour. The Ivy is familiar enough in its climbing form, but not as a dense bushy shrub to group upon the lawn or to fill beds with for the winter. The ordinary tree form (*Hedera arborea*) is of deep colour, and to us more beautiful than any variegated kind, though of course splashes of yellow make a change. The shrubs named so far are variegated more or less strongly, and the next group considered is that with green foliage without other colouring.

SHRUBS WITH GREEN FOLIAGE.

Those mentioned are :

Aucuba japonica mascula. *Aucuba japonica femina*.

Aucuba japonica vera nana. *Andromeda floribunda*.

Buxus sempervirens. *Berberis Aquifolium*.

Cotoneaster microphylla. *Cerasus rotundifolia*—the Laurel.

Cerasus caucasica. *Cerasus lusitanica*. *Cerasus lusitanica myrtifolia*.

Euonymus japonicus. *Eleagnus macrophyllus*.

Erica (Heath) herbacea carnea. *Erica (Heath) vagans alba*.

Erica (Heath) vu'garis Alportii.

Hedera (Ivy) arborea. *Hedera (Ivy) arborea fructo lutea*.

Kalmia latifolia. *Laurustinus*—dwarf French variety.

Ligustrum japonicum. *Rhododendron ponticum*.

Phillyrea Vilmoriniana. *Skimmia japonica*.

Skimmia japonica fragrans. *Skimmia japonica oblata*.

Yucca gloriosa. *Yucca recurva*.

A LIST OF CONIFERS FOR WINTER.

This list of Conifers has been carefully compiled, and consists of five distinct groups. Those with golden variegation recommended consist of *Cupressus Lawsoniana lutea*, *Juniperus chinensis aurea*, *J. japonica*, *Retinospora plumosa*, *R. pisifera*, *Thuya Verveneana*, *T. occidentalis lutea*. Silver variegation: *Cupressus Lawsoniana alba variegata*, *C. L. spica nana*, *Juniperus japonica alba variegata*, *Retinospora plumosa argentea*. Bronze foliage: *Cryptomeria elegans*, *Retinospora ericoides*. Glaucous foliage: *Abies pungens glauca*, *Cupressus Lawsoniana Allumii*, *C. L. argentea*, *C. L. Fraseri*, *C. L. nana glauca*, *Retinospora squarrosa*. Green foliage: *Cupressus Lawsoniana*, *C. L. Shawii* (one of the best), *C. L. ericoides*, *C. L. gracilis*, *Juniperus chinensis*, and *J. virginiana*.

PITY THE BLIND ANIMALS.

As a matter of fact, they need no pity, no more, in fact, than Mr. Punch's old mendicant, who exclaimed in his sightless gratitude, "I know'd as how you'd not forgot the poor blind man soon as I see you coming round the corner." We ourselves may in our excesses have upset more than one of Nature's calculations for our good, but, when left a free hand, she is neither prodigal nor mean. Had Miss Corelli's natural history, for instance, been one half as strong as her imagination, she would not have given us the extraordinary anomaly of a beetle hatched in the darkness of a mummy's ceremonies yet possessing brilliant eyes. Considering the ages it had dwelt away from the light, its eyes must long since have fallen into disuse. It is in this exact apportioning of faculties and senses to the requirements that the all-wise Mother is at her best. The animals that inhabit the dark caves and the extreme depths of the sea beyond the range of the sun's light soon lose their eyesight, and the eyes themselves burrow away under the skin. There are blind fishes and insects and spiders in many of the great caves of Kentucky, and in the Adelsberg cave in Carniola we have the well-known olm, a singular reptile with remarkable bunches of gills, three claws to its feet, and minute and useless eyes beneath the skin, though, as with the teeth in toothless whales, the new-hatched young show signs of greater susceptibility to the light. Besides losing the function of eyesight, it is characteristic of these cave-dwellers to lose their colouring, and we thus get a wonderful and interesting series of white beetles and spiders, the last-named, curiously enough, still weaving their web. In all these, however, there are traces of the originally used eyes, and for truly eyeless creatures we must

THE NATIONAL ROSE SOCIETY AND ITS CATALOGUE.

This famous society, of which the Rev. H. Honeywood D'Ombrain and Mr. Edward Mawley are the honorary secretaries, has just issued its catalogue for the present year. It is quite a book, and is a descriptive catalogue of "Exhibition and Garden Roses," to which is appended selections of varieties for exhibition, standards, pillars, arches and walls, bedding, and pot culture, illustrations being given of several important types. As the planting season for Roses is still with us, beginners and those who wish to make important additions to their collection should consult this useful guide. Little cultural notes are given also; thus we read that the single-flowering kinds recommended are Paul's Royal Scarlet, vivid crimson scarlet, moderately vigorous, good in autumn; Paul's Single White, white, very vigorous, requires a warm wall; Rosa bracteata, known as the Macartney Rose, white, vigorous, requires a warm wall; Wichuriana, white with yellow stamens, trailing habit, dark shining foliage, and so forth. The price to non-members is 2s.

EUCHARIS GRANDIFLORA.

The flowers of the Eucharis are well known and justly admired for their spotless purity, and apart from their great ornamental value they are largely used when cut for wreaths and bouquets. The best soil consists of two-thirds good fibrous yellow loam and one-third leaf mould, to which some rough sand may be added. Eucharis amazonica is a bulbous plant which can be grown singly in pots 5in. in diameter, or three bulbs may be placed in a 7in. pot, while larger masses may be readily made up. The flowering season of the Eucharis is not limited to a particular time of the year, as the plants bloom more or less throughout the twelve months. After flowering they should be kept somewhat drier, though by no means quite so, for a month, when if started again by giving the usual amount of water they will soon bloom. Even where few plants are grown in succession may be readily maintained in this way. The Eucharis when growing should be watered freely, and it also enjoys overhead syringing, but of course not when in bloom. In the case of established plants increase is easy by the small bulbs at the base of the large ones, so that in time, if undisturbed, a pot will become almost full of bulbs. There are several kinds of Eucharis, but *E. amazonica* is by far the best known. Other beautiful kinds are *E. candida*, *E. Sanderiana*, *E. Lowi*, and *E. Stevensii*.

CHRYSANTHEMUMS UPON WARM WALLS.

The following note may interest readers: "From amateur gardeners and cottagers one may learn many valuable lessons. As I passed a cottage in our village I noticed in the first week in December a superb mass of flowers, produced by a variety of Chrysanthemum named Lord Brooke. The plants were growing on each side of the door, the aspect west. They were in a bed of soil kept in position on the flagstones by boards about 9in. deep. As the shoots grew they were tacked to the wall, and they had grown 6ft. in height. The shoots were not crowded, and therefore had become well ripened. When I saw the plants they were smothered with flowers in big trusses, as no disbudding had been practised. This mass of bronzy yellow blossom against the old grey cottage made a delightful picture on a December day."

CATALOGUES RECEIVED.—Messrs. Foster and Pearson, Limited, Beeston, Notts, send us their interesting catalogue of greenhouses, frames, conservatories, and everything appertaining to horticultural buildings. It is well illustrated and bound.—DAY'S ANNUAL FOR 1900. This is a handy little guide for all interested in farming, with notes too of a domestic nature. From Messrs. Day and Sons, Crewe.—Messrs. J. Cheal and Sons, Crawley, flower and vegetable seeds.—MY GARDEN DIARY FOR 1890. A dainty little diary from Messrs. Sutton and Sons, of Reading. The cover is as pretty as anything we have seen in the way of diaries or notebooks.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We are always pleased to assist readers in difficulties concerning their gardens. We are also in touch with many first-class gardeners, and shall be happy to recommend one to any who may require the services of a reliable man.

look to the depths of the sea and the records of the Challenger, and we shall further find a very wonderful provision by which those fishes that have eyes in the regions beyond the sun's reach also carry their own illumination, in the shape of phosphorescent spots or some other light-giving device. Of fishes, however, that inhabit more moderate depths, in which there is a little light only, we find very prominent eyes, and these are doubtless for the purpose of catching all the available rays of light. Such are the conger eel and a number of Australian species that I could, though without any advantage to readers in these parts, name and describe. An analogy will be noticed in the staring orbs of the owls and night-jars, and other birds of the gloaming that have to make the most of the waning light to catch their agile prey. A very curious and interesting adaptation, by the way, should have been mentioned above in connection with the blind crabs found in the deep soundings, and that is that the stalks that normally carry the eyes of crabs and lobsters are so modified in these eyeless crustaceans as to serve rather the sensitive functions of antennae. Our own mole and bat are commonly regarded as blind, and more than one poet has followed the footsteps of the immortal one, to whose natural history Mr. Frank Harris might well have devoted one of the fascinating chapters of his forthcoming book. But they are not blind, and the eyes of the mole are easily seen by anyone who will trouble to blow aside the fur. In the south of Europe, it is true, there is another and totally distinct mole, in which the eyes lie under the skin, but in our own little engineer they are merely conveniently small to save it much pain when forcing its way through the earth. In like manner the elephant has but tiny eyes, and thus avoids many blinding scratches when tearing

away through the dense jungle. As for the bats, no one who has watched them chase moths in the evening would ever accuse them of blindness, though they could possibly, with their marvellous and almost incredible sense of touch, find the insects in absolute darkness. This sense, something unknown in ourselves, was demonstrated in striking fashion by a priest named Spallanzani, a man of scientific, if somewhat cruel, tendencies, who blinded a number of bats and set them at large in a room hung with wands. In no case did the little creatures, though sightless, disturb the obstacles that hung in their course.

In the barnacle we have a very unique and wonderful case of a creature that can afford as age comes on to dispense with the eyesight that was so useful in youth. For the young and old barnacle are as different, one from the other, as fishes from seaweed. In the heyday of life the barnacle swims about the sea, seeking its food with the aid of its eyes, and generally leading a roaming existence. Later in life, however, it grows tired of this aimless wandering, and settles down to worry ships' captains by attaching itself to the keel of their craft and defying the much-advertised powers of various preventive paints. Once, then, the barnacle has become a fixture, whether on ships or sharks, its eyesight is of no more use. It cannot seek its food and it cannot shun its foes; for it never more will move. Therefore its eyes become superfluous, and, according to Nature's invariable rule in such cases, disappear. The grown barnacle cannot, in fact, see an inch in front of its shell. How, then, is it to obtain its food? Nature has not forgotten the crustacean—for to the crustaceans, in spite of its mollusc-like appearance, this curious creature belongs—in its dotage, and it finds itself provided with curly feet with which to set the water going in a current and bring food to its ready mouth. Thus, then, is the old blind barnacle, man and wife in one, provided for in its declining days. We, however, who have ruined eyesight and a good deal beside through a mode of living not allowed for in Nature's reckonings, must have recourse to the oculist and optician when the eyes begin to fail.

The civilised life is a different story altogether, and even our children come into the world ready to suffer acute ophthalmia before the young of other creatures have in many cases opened their perfect eyes. We squint, often from the cradle. There is little or no squinting among four-footed creatures. To such passes have our follies brought the race!

F. G. AFLALO.

A Brush Turkey's Nest.

ONE would never think from the appearance of a brush turkey that it possessed even the average amount of brains allotted to the genus fowl; but, judging by the exceedingly clever manner in which these birds incubate their eggs, one is bound to admit that they possess in a marked degree an amount of cleverness of which one would not imagine them capable. Her Grace of Bedford is very greatly interested in various kinds of foreign species of fowls, which she has imported on various occasions from abroad, and the photograph given of the nest of these interesting birds was taken by Her Grace at Woburn Abbey, where it was built by some of the birds she has imported.

The mounds are very large, and to a stranger have in the distance the appearance of an ant-hill. The mound is first scratched by the parent birds into the shape of a large basin, in which the female deposits her eggs; a distance of quite 50yds. is sometimes cleared by the scratching of the birds in collecting the material to form their nest. It is thought by many that the father bird is the one who supplies heat to the eggs after they are laid by leaves and vegetable refuse, which naturally heat, removing the heating matter each day to cool the eggs, while on a hot day he will clear the top entirely and leave the eggs exposed to the air. Some marvellous instinct teaches these turkeys how to regulate the heat of this curious incubator. It is by the kind permission of the Duchess of Bedford that we are enabled to use this photograph.

NOTES ON SHOOTING.

THE wave of military enthusiasm surging over the land has given rise to heated discussions on the subject of rifles, rifle shooting, and, in particular, rifle clubs. The result is that many "miniature rifle clubs," as they are called, are springing into existence, clubs at which the Government rifle and the Morris tube are not employed, but instead either miniature Colt repeaters or Winchester repeaters, the latter for choice, as they have a finer sight, and are, to my mind, preferable in other respects. The question has been asked several times of late, Why are Englishmen so keen about cricket, football, golf, and so forth, yet so little interested in rifle shooting? No reply has been forthcoming, but the true reason is that few forms of amusement are more devoid of excitement, and, consequently, more liable to have a depressing effect upon the spirits of young men, than rifle shooting competitions among novices. Only men who are exceptionally keen about rifle practice think it worth their while to spend a whole afternoon, possibly the only afternoon they are able to spare out of the week, watching a lot of raw beginners firing at a mark while they themselves await their turn to shoot. The entire aspect of affairs is changed, however, when a repeating rifle of small calibre is substituted for the Morris tube, and each competitor allowed to fire his eight or sixteen shots in succession, without his being obliged to reload. At a newly-founded club of this sort, at which I was present a week ago, the bulls were in reality gong, which struck one every time they were hit. Many hundreds of rounds were discharged during the afternoon, and the competitions were uniformly brisk and exciting; in short, the very reverse of ordinary rifle shooting matches in which beginners take part.

It may be urged that the practice obtained at these clubs must prove of little practical use, owing to the lightness of the rifles, but I maintain that a beginner who fires a hundred or more shots within the space of two hours or so will become accustomed to handle a rifle far more quickly than the individual who discharges, say, thirty or forty shots out of a Morris tube during the whole course of the afternoon. Moreover, the man with the repeater will grow keen about rifle shooting almost immediately, whereas the Morris tube man, being obliged to shift his position, and generally derange himself between every shot, in order to reload, is very liable to grow disgusted at the outset. Later, of course, the members of these miniature rifle clubs will come to shoot with the Service rifle and regulation ammunition, but by that time they will, in all probability, have developed into proficient marksmen, and therefore be unlikely to lack interest in what I may term *bona fide* rifle shooting. Several Mauser clubs also in course of formation are to be run on similar lines, a Mauser pistol—converted for the time into a rifle—being the weapon used, and each shooter being allowed to fire the ten shots in succession. There can be little doubt but that these "miniature clubs" will enormously increase the popularity of rifle shooting throughout Great Britain, and largely help to transform us into a nation of marksmen—a transformation sorely needed.

An enterprising French gunmaker has lately sent me a device, which he describes as "a marvellous fore sight warranted to improve the form of every man who makes use of it." He declares that it has been known to make "rank duffers kill driven birds one after another," men who before they adopted his invention were unable to hit one bird out of ten. Many more details are given; but I have neither the patience nor inclination to translate them. Briefly this "marvellous" fore sight is a plain ring of metal, which can be attached to the muzzle of a shot-gun by means of a powerful steel spring. The inner diameter of the ring is exactly half an inch, and the idea is that the object to be fired at may be sighted more accurately and more rapidly through this circular aperture than with an ordinary sight. I shot with the ring for two whole days during the present season, and, though I tried hard to perform brilliantly with it, I must confess that the attempts proved failures. On the other hand, the sight did not interfere with my ordinary form, such as it is, though occasionally the ring became entangled in brambles. I need hardly add that throughout the day it served as a loadstone for the witticisms of the other guns, and a source of merriment to the small army of round-eyed rustics.

There is some talk of a pigeon match between two of the best shots in the world—the one an Englishman, the other an Italian, at 100 birds each, for £1,000 a side. If it does take place it will cause a great sensation among trap-shooters, no such stakes having been shot for in a private match since Lord de Clifford and Mr. Davenport Handley decided their famous contest at the Gun



A BRUSH TURKEY'S NEST AT WOBURN ABBEY.

Club in 1884. Upon that occasion Lord de Clifford won easily, though handicapped at 31yds. Mr. Handley stood at 28yds.

I hear that next season the asbestos glove, now so largely worn at big shots, is to be superseded by an improved asbestos protector, capable of being slipped on to the barrels in a moment, and removed with equal rapidity. The spring metal hand protectors, though often seen in the field, do not appear to be generally approved of, except by trap-shooters, who make use of them for a different purpose. It is rather remarkable that even at the present day there are men who obstinately refuse to wear a glove or make use of a protector when the barrels of their guns become too hot to hold, yet are not above wrapping a handkerchief round the barrels, and then attempting to go on firing.

TAZZLE.

ON THE GREEN.

M R. "JOHNNY" BALL has gone out as a yeoman to join the forces in South Africa. It is a fine thing of him to do, and we need not doubt his doing "yeoman's service"; but at the same time it is an act that will rob this year's amateur championship of not a little of its interest. It would not matter so much if Mr. "Freddie" Tait had not gone too—and

been wounded also, though, we are happy to be informed, not severely nor in such manner as is likely to interfere with his future golfing glory. But in the meantime this martial spirit is likely to take somewhat from the shine of the glory of the amateur championship of 1900. "Oh, yes," we may expect to hear said in course of the new century, which does not yet seem to have begun, except as "made in Germany"; "oh, yes, but he won the amateur championship when the best two amateurs were away fighting in South Africa." Especially will it sound rather as a reproach than an honour to be hailed winner of the championship for the last year of this century, or the first, Germanic speaking. Of the next, as if it implied "Why the deuce were you winning the championship? If you were fit to do that you ought to have been fit to fight a Boer in South Africa." And it is rather curious that the year that has taken these two, whom we may surely regard the one as the greatest Scottish and the other as the greatest English amateur player of the day, across the sea should be the year in which the amateur tournament falls to be played at Sandwich, a green that is especially suited to the long driving capabilities of these two. Assuredly the championship of the amateurs will not this year be the crown of glory that it has been in the past, seeing that the two who are unquestionably the favourites will be far away. At the same time, it will give an opening for some new talent; and we rather want to see some new talent coming on, for the old familiar faces of our champions are becoming just a little tiresome. All honour to those who prefer the storming of the kopje to the bunker!



AT THE THEATRE

CERTAINLY most of the people laughed, and very likely "The Masked Ball" will attract a certain somewhat *declassé* class of playgoer; but there were many present at the Criterion Theatre who did not laugh when Miss Ellaline Terriss was pretending to be drunk,

and who will not readily forgive the management for affording us the first unpleasant impression we have ever had of Miss Ellaline Terriss.

It is nothing that she did it beautifully, that it was as void of offence as such a thing can be void of offence, that she almost idealised even tipsiness. It is illegitimate fun; it is unpleasant fun; it is fun which leaves a sour taste in the mouth; it is fun which necessitates a young actress—who, till now, has always been the exponent of girlish charm, of freshness, of innocence, of prettiness—leering, stammering, stumbling. At the sometimes-maligned Gaiety, Miss Terriss had never had anything to do that was not as fragrant and as sweet as a bouquet.

And there is really no reason for it. The somewhat bald and conventional humour of Mr. Clyde Fitch's adaptation of a French farce could so easily have been diverted into other channels. The young wife could so easily have chosen another method of punishment for her husband. There must be an unpleasant "kink" in the composition of a girl who tries to make the man she loves believe her to be a confirmed tippler and secret drinker. Is there no one to tell Mr. Frohman that we English have our prejudices, no one to advise him of the things which are likely to go against the grain? It seems to us he should have been warned that Londoners might not care to see Miss Terriss playing the toper.

The story is the same old story, with variations. Mr. Seymour Hicks is once again the jealous husband; Mr. Herbert Standing—very cleverly "made up"—once again the middle-aged gentleman who goes "out on the racket"; Miss Fanny Brough once again the jealous virago. It is always the same old story—and the variations are nothing to speak of.

Once again the situation was saved by the acting. Nothing could have been better than the distracted husband of Mr. Seymour Hicks, who grows better with every part he plays. There was any amount of spirit in his humour, and a good deal of natural sentiment when required. He is still a little too energetic, but we readily forgive this in these days of lackadaisicalness, for the heart and the earnestness of his work. Mr. Herbert Standing gave us a capital little study of the brow-beaten husband. Miss Fanny Brough once again showed herself incomparable, putting meaning into lines of the tritest kind.

Miss Ellaline Terriss, gaining in experience and retaining her sweetness, did wonders for the play; her vivacity and her charm and her sense of humour brighten every scene and give it an interest it may not intrinsically possess. Even those of us who were so sorry to see what she was forced to do had to admire the art of it. But, all the same, though "The Masked Ball" may be a success of curiosity, we cannot help hoping that the public will not encourage this sort of thing.

THE engagement of Miss Louie Freear for the character of Puck in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at Her Majesty's Theatre is one of those interest-compelling and unexpected moves on the part of Mr. Tree by which he manages to invest each new enterprise with the attraction of the curious and the unconventional. It is true that Miss Freear has already played the part, but only in one of the smaller provincial companies; so that, so far as London is concerned, the experiment is entirely novel. Till now, Miss Freear has been known only to the metropolis as the impersonator of Cockney boys and girls, "slaves," and the like. Consequently, we are not aware whether her talents extend in any other direction; but, if the pronouncedly Cockney traits were not natural to her, but acquired, the sense of humour and the simple pathos she has displayed would lead us to believe that she is a true artist, and only donned the quaint pronunciation and bearing of the London lower classes because they were essential to the type she has portrayed hitherto.

Miss Louie Freear first became popular in town when she sang that very remarkable song, "Sister Mary Jane's Top Note," in the musical play, "The Gay Parisienne," at the Duke of York's Theatre. From this she jumped to positive fame in the farce "Oh, Susannah!" at the Royalty Theatre, in which the lowly pathos and quaint humour of the actress were irresistible. Since then Miss Freear has not been associated with London successes, but her share in whatever she has played has always been marked by cleverness and art, albeit as Julia, and as the drummer-boy in "Boy Bob," the characters belonged to exactly the same category as those in which she had already excelled. As Puck, in such a production and at such a theatre, Miss Freear will enable us to judge pretty conclusively of the extent of the talents of an actress who won, very quickly, a place for herself in the estimation of playgoers.

After a period of waiting far too long we are to see Miss Kate Rorke on the stage again. Why she has secluded herself for such a lengthened period is a mystery, for she is one of the most popular of our stage heroines. In the early summer Miss Rorke will produce at a series of matinées at the Prince of Wales's Theatre Echegaray's play, "The Stain that Cleanses," the second work of the Spanish dramatist which will have been seen in England, "Mariana"—presented at the Court Theatre by the New Century Theatre Society—being the first. We are promised that Mr. Martin Harvey will also be seen in the cast. But we are not to be denied for quite such a long time the opportunity of welcoming Miss Rorke back among us, for at the Princess of Wales's Theatre, Kennington, in February, she, with her company, will revive one of Mr. Pinero's early plays, "The Squire," concerning which there was at the time an argument between the dramatist and Mr. Thomas Hardy, who believed that the play had been founded upon his novel, "Far from the Madding Crowd." The completeness of the revival may be gauged from the announcement that



Mr. Pinero will himself superintend the rehearsals. For this occasion, at any rate, the beautiful Princess of Wales's will cease to be merely a suburban playhouse, and will attract over the water playgoers who usually do not travel so far in search of entertainment.

One of the most unsuccessful of the plays of that most successful dramatist, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, was "The Crusaders." Mr. Jones had seen the managers making fortunes from his works, and thought that there was no reason why he should not attempt to become a manager for whom he could write plays without fear of their not giving satisfaction to the entrepreneur, and at the same time divert into the pockets of the author the wealth with which hitherto the author had been supplying the managers. And of course this play, "The Crusaders," which was to accomplish all this, proved to be one of the least remunerative ever written by the playwright.

Now we learn that the insatiable Mr. Charles Wyndham has bought the right in this piece and means to revive it in the future. Is Mr. Wyndham going to create a "corner" in the works of our leading playwrights? He has secured all Mr. Pinero's famous Court farces, "Dandy Dick," "The Magistrate," "The Schoolmistress," and now it would appear as though he were going to "put a ring fence round" the plays of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones.

Many members of "The Belle of New York" company, which finished its

wonderful career in London amid such scenes of enthusiasm as are but seldom witnessed within the walls of a playhouse, promise to return to us in April next. They will be very welcome. Miss Edna May, the "Belle" herself, Mr. Sullivan, the "polite lunatic," Mr. Frank Lawton, the whistling "Bowery boy," Mr. George Schiller, the inimitable Mugg, and Miss Ella Snyder, the delightful Bowery girl, need not have gone back at all, so far as we were concerned, but they were obliged by contracts with their American manager.

The conservatism of London is a very real thing, and it behoves all those—even theatrical managers—who seek to overcome it to study the idiosyncrasies of the Capital of the World and those who seek entertainment within its walls. Mr. Charles Frohman, for instance, who occupies a commanding position in American theatricals, makes little or no impression here. That is because he does not devote the time to the necessary study of our requirements. One does not mean to say that he does not achieve success sometimes, but he certainly has not impressed himself on the drama here as he has done in New York. It is true that we do not want his "syndicating" methods, and will not have them, but we should like to see him a prominent force nevertheless. But this will never happen so long as he attempts to direct his London affairs from the other side of the Atlantic, paying merely flying visits to these shores.

PHOEBUS.

A LADY AND HER ANIMALS.

MRS. DRING'S home is at Rockgrove, Little Island, near Cork, and she farms 300 acres there, near the banks of the river Lee. Between Cork and the sea there are several islands in the Lee: Little Island, on which part of Mrs. Dring's farm is situated; Great Island, on which Queenstown stands; Fota Island, the Irish home of Mr. Arthur Hugh Smith Barry; and others, among them being Haulbowline, the Irish naval dockyard, and Spike Island, now an artillery garrison, formerly a convict prison.

Mrs. Dring belongs to a sporting family, being sister of Mr. Gubbins, owner of the famous Galtee More, and, by the way, Mr. Gubbins has now a young horse which is expected to eclipse even the great Derby winner. The Great Southern and Western Railway runs through Mrs. Dring's lands, and everyone who has travelled to or from Queenstown has seen her celebrated herd of Jerseys, which graze in her fields on either side of the railway. The herd is well known to Americans, many of whom, visiting Ireland



AT THE POND.

for the first time, make particular enquiry at Queenstown as to what time on the journey they may look out for the Jerseys.

The first illustration shows the herd at the pond in a field on the island side of the railway. Among the sixty Jerseys is Speckled Beauty, a cow which in no way belongs to them, but in fact must be left among them, as the whole herd is so much attached to her that they become uneasy and will not rest if she is taken from them. Mrs. Dring's house is seen in the distance, and between the trees and the house is a great stretch of lawn, shown in another picture, where the Jerseys enjoy the cool shade and the luxuriant grass.

Each cow in this celebrated herd is a picture. One of them taken quite at random, as she happened to separate from the rest of the herd, is shown here. It will be seen she is a beautiful animal; she has won two first prizes, but most of the others are quite as handsome as Silver Lady, and some excel her.

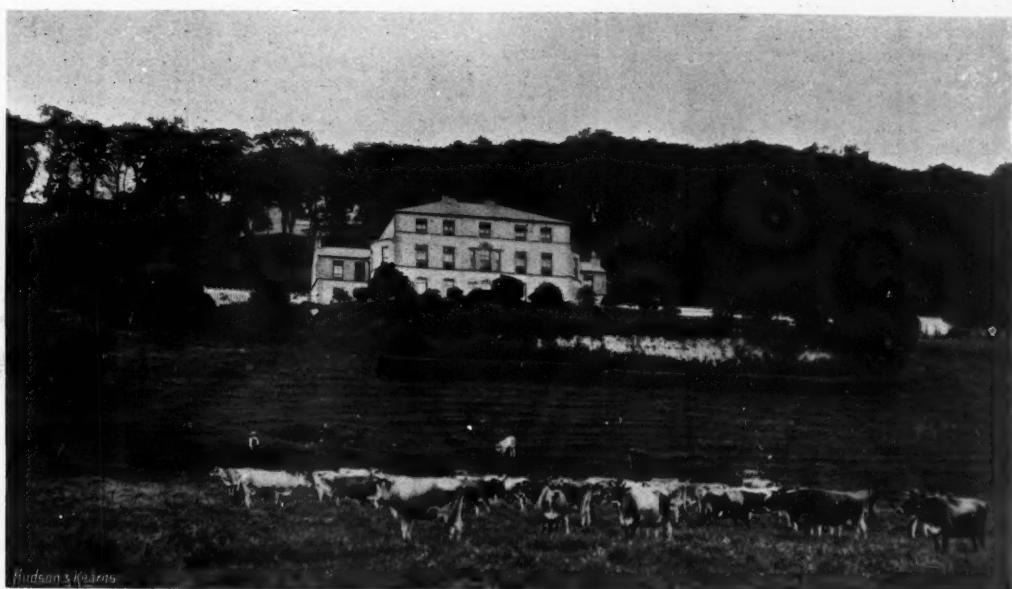
There are four bulls belonging to this herd. The biggest of the four is a magnificent animal, Lord of



PONIES: SILVER TAIL AND JOEY.

the Lake, who has won many first prizes and several cups, some of which had to be won three years in succession—in fact, this animal took first prize wherever he was exhibited. He won at Dublin, at Birmingham, at Cork, and at Belfast. Another of the bulls, Reminder's Glory, won first prize and the cup at Dublin, and first at Belfast.

Above the house are very extensive fields of many acres. In one large one may be seen the twenty Jersey yearlings; in another the twenty Jersey calves. These, with the sixty Jersey cows and the four bulls, make 104 Jerseys on the farm. There is also a herd of Aberdeen-Angus cattle, which, in their line, are as famous as the Jerseys, and a flock of sheep equally well known. Mrs. Dring does not confine herself to cattle and sheep; she keeps twenty-two horses on her farm. Her Clydesdales are very fine animals. Among the horses for the use of the house are a pair of ponies, SILVER TAIL and JOEY. The former came from Iceland, the latter from Wales. In the trap they make a pretty turn-out, and perhaps Mrs. Dring's favourite one, though a cart drawn by Silver Cloud runs it very close in her estimation.



THE HERD OF JERSEYS.

SILVER CLOUD won the cup in Cork and a first prize wherever exhibited. He is a cob of about 15h., and, as the picture is a capital likeness, there is no need to further describe him.

Visitors to Rockgrove get a vociferous welcome from eighteen dachshunds, who evidently consider the place their own;

and the noisier their greeting, the greater their hospitality. Mrs. Dring sometimes brings out a whip to restore order, but the dachshunds know her just as well as her human friends do, and are well aware that, although the whip looks very formidable, it will never be used. A few of them are shown on the terrace steps near the hall door, and it is a matter for surprise that none of their good friends, the cats, are among them. There are no less than thirty-four cats in the place, each one a pedigree animal, but they seem to have a great objection to being photographed, which is a pity, as they are most beautiful. Most of them are Persians; a few are tabbies. They are happy animals, being fed on rabbits, fish, and milk from the Jerseys, and are just as well looked after as are all the animals at Rockgrove. Reference must be made to the fowls, for there are about 300 cocks and hens of different breeds, all good; about 200 ducks, 200 turkeys, and 60 geese; in all about 800 birds, each one worth looking at.

It takes thirty people to work Rockgrove Farm, and Mr. Baker, steward to Mrs. Dring, manages it with great tact. He is a most capable man, in every way fit for his important post, and seems at home in every department, from preparing the various animals for the many shows they appear at, to raising the different crops to feed them. His crops take many prizes.

Mrs. Dring has won a great number of cups. She has always made it a rule to present a cup of at least equal value to the society which awards her one. No one who knows Mrs. Dring is surprised at this, for she is generously liberal in all things. Her animals are well fed, and her employés well paid and well looked after, so that anyone taken into her service is considered as provided for. Then her hospitality is unbounded, and her house is one of the pleasantest in County Cork, for she makes her friends at home. It is a great pity she will not allow herself to be photographed, as her own face is



SOME OF THE DACHSHUNDS.



COB: SILVER CLOUD.

ar and away the most pleasing picture to be seen at Rockgrove.

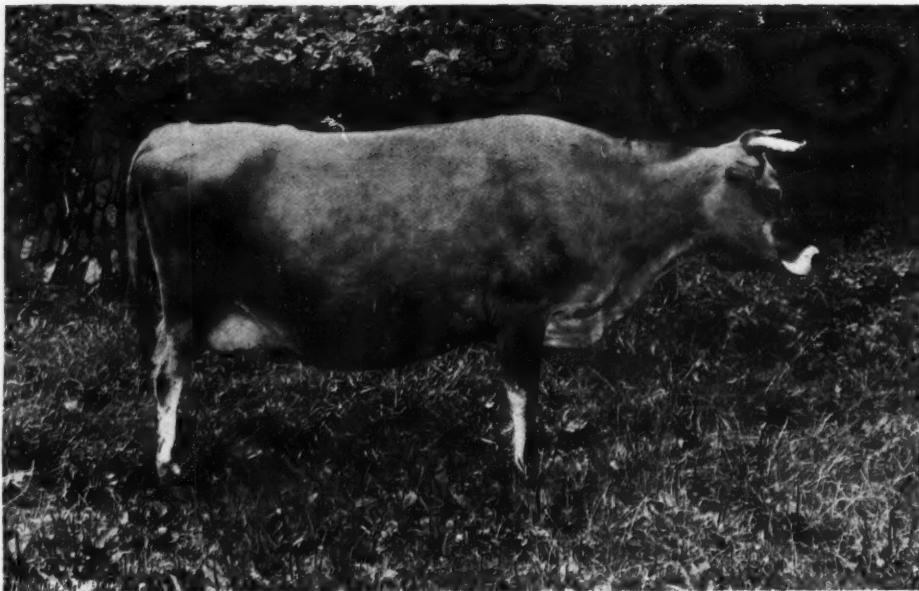
It may interest some to know what amount of fodder the Rockgrove animals consume each year. About eighty acres are in oats, and about 100 tons in addition will be required; 200 tons of hay and 150 of straw, with 350 tons of turnips and the same quantity of mangolds, are consumed, with 30 tons of cotton cake and 20 tons of Indian meal. These items will serve to show that breeding prize animals is an expensive amusement, but it circulates a large amount of money, and thus brings comfort to many a home.

O'er Field and Furrow.

TWO most desirable countries will be vacant at the close of the season. Lord Longford, the very popular Master of the Westmeath, is, it is said, selected for the command of the Irish Yeomanry squadron. Although his departure will be regretted, yet no better choice could have been made. Lord Longford is a keen soldier, and is well known as a hard rider with the Pytchley and Grafton when he is on duty with his regiment—the 2nd Life Guards—in England. Then Lord Bathurst is about to resign the Cirencester division of the V.W.H. Though a small country, this is a delightful one to ride over and to hunt in. For my own part I have never seen better sport anywhere, save perhaps in Mr. Fernie's. One of the secrets of the good sport of the V.W.H. lies in there being woodlands large enough to rear stout foxes in—not so large as to detain hounds all day. Woods that will hold wild foxes are the nurseries of sport, though, alas! in these days some big coverts seem to herd foxes which are as tame and know as little country as though they came from London; but that is a burning question. The V.W.H. owes very much to Lord Bathurst and his father, and no retirement could occasion more regret than this will do. The Quorn on Friday were at Queniborough, but had only a poor day, marked by two incidents. As the pack was going to the Coplow to draw Mr. Fernie's hounds were viewed racing along after a fox which was running the familiar line from Thurnby Gorse to the Coplow. Some of the Quorn field joined in the run, on the principle that a fox on the move is worth a brace in the covert. The passage of Mr. Fernie's pack disturbed some of the many foxes in this part of the country, and the Quorn had a short—too short—gallop after an outlier, in the course of which Mr. Foxhall Keene got a nasty fall and had to give up. The Pytchley also had a very moderate day from Althorp on Friday week; indeed, those who like myself were obliged to be away from the "Shires" at the end of last week had but little to regret. To see new countries is a great pleasure. There is always something to be learned during such excursions. Shropshire is one of those countries that we hear little of nowadays. The pack exists chiefly for the pleasure of the residents in the county, and comparatively few strangers hunt there. In the days when the great Ninrod held a kind of monopoly of hunting literature, Shropshire was written of by him very freely. In those days it was a good horse-breeding district, and many so-called "Irish" horses came from Shropshire. Then the local squires did Mr. Appelby very well, and so a good many of them are immortalised in the "Hunting Tours." Shropshire is, so far as I can judge, a somewhat rough and trappy, but a good scenting country. The pack is hunted by that very keen amateur Mr. Rowland Hunt, with Mr. Frank Bibley to take command of the field. The chief drawback is wire, but it is being overcome on some estates; notably Sir Walter Smythe's, at Acton Burnell, is free from the pest. It is needless to say that good sport is shown, for Mr. Rowland Hunt's reputation as a huntsman is more than a local one. At Condover, where the fixture was on January 5th, there is a fine park with several foxy-looking coverts scattered about. There were present Sir Walter Smythe, Colonel Cotes, of Pitchford, a great supporter and preserver of foxes, Sir Walter Corbet, Captain Butler, Mrs. and Miss Phillips, Miss Mallinson, Mr. Vawdrey, and others whose names I did not hear. One of the coverts in the park was drawn first, and a fox was hunted out and about the park and killed after a very pretty chase, but this was nothing to what was in store for us. Fresh from their success, hounds were taken to a covert the name of which I did not catch. In fact, the sound of a find reminded strangers that in a new country it is advisable to keep a strict attention on the business in hand. Well it was for those who did so, for when the fox was away Mr. Hunt and his hounds were not long after him. The fox headed straight for another covert, but so closely did hounds stick to his brush that he rather lost than gained by the turns he made round it. The pace was not very fast, but hounds kept hunting on past Pitchford Wood. Nor did the good fox dwell again much till he reached the hill. Here it was plain that he was done. A sharp turn told us of his plight. If he could not get to ground he was ours, and hounds, hunting beautifully, ran into him in capital style at a place called Short's Rough. Hounds drew again, and had, I believe, a capital gallop, but after a run of over an hour, with some hill work, I could scarcely venture more on a borrowed horse, and left them.

All the above sport took place on Friday, but for other experiences we must turn back to Tuesday and Wednesday. The former day with the Cottesmore at Knossington, the latter with the Belvoir at Waltham, both provided a great deal of good sport, and of this I take two runs which, if not of the very best, were yet worth recording.

At Knossington (Mr. Duncan's) we were for a time enveloped in fog, and it was after twelve before the veil lifted sufficiently to enable us to hunt. It was later still when Gilson put his hounds into Orton Park Wood. Men are apt to take things a little easily when this wood is drawn. There is notoriously a bad scent here, and foxes take advantage of this. Often have I sat on my horse and watched a fox dodging about from one side of the ride to the other, and hounds quite unable to do more than puzzle themselves as to his whereabouts. However, on this occasion the fox was a stranger, who had been hunted



JERSEY COW: SILVER LADY.

by the Cottesmore ladies in some better scenting covert, for he left at once with the little bitches racing, chirping, and driving forward as they touched the line for Braunston Vale. Gradually, as we settled in our places, those who watched the hounds could see that they were sweeping round towards the left, and hastened to act accordingly. This gave some of us a commanding position, and we were riding in a very small ring, with the pack describing a larger circle on our right hand. A straight run is good, but it is when hounds run wide circle that you really see them at work. Only it is well to be careful and remember how great an advantage we have, and to watch for the parti-coloured wedge-shaped formation hounds take when running. As soon as the point grows blunt take a pull; a check or at least a change is imminent, and no one likes to be found right across the line. The check came on Oakham Pastures, and the cause was a fresh fox. Then we drew Prior's Coppice, the beautiful covert on the hill opposite Ridlington Village. To that place a fox, quickly found and swiftly chased, led us at a good pace, and it is no such very easy country to ride over.

Turn we now to the Belvoir pack at Waltham, and let us pass over the miseries of a pelting rain in the morning, and hunts more or less unsatisfactory after unenterprising foxes from Goadby.

What a good covert Melton Spinney is, and what a bad scent there was. It is on such days one notes the magnificent breeding of this pack and the work they do. Resolutely, patiently they hunted a weak line by Holwell up to Welby Osier-beds. I rode nearly the same line from Melton Spinney last year, though then the pace was better. There was no change of foxes at Welby; hounds never left their hunted fox, though I should say there was temptation to do so. It was a weary fox that was viewed away, but he had strength to beat us after all, and to gain shelter in an open earth. Hounds ought to have had their fox, for with the poor scent they did wonders, and the way they stuck to their hunted fox on the Osier-beds was beyond praise. I see some of the ladies' papers call Miss Hardcastle the fiancée, but, indeed, there are others, for is not Mr. Bertie Sheriffe going to marry Miss Vickers, of the Old Lodge, the house wherein the midnight steeplechase was hatched. X.



EVERY week does it become more and more difficult to find anything of sufficient interest to write about under the above heading. There is plenty of racing of a sort going on under National Hunt Rules, it is true, but how often does one see a horse of any character or a race worth remembering? Probably the most interesting event of last week was the appearance of the entries for the Grand National. This is the one only steeple-chase of the whole season that makes any show of keeping up its old reputation, and yet even this has of late years been showing a sad falling off in quality. If this year's entry of seventy-five beats last year's by three, it is, nevertheless, made up of a terrible lot of moderate old staggers, whilst the majority of those entered could not hope to win this race with any weight; in fact, many of them could hardly get round the course in a week.

There are only four five year olds entered, these being Hagiolite, Constitution, Barton Court, and Skirlnaked, none of whom are likely to prove dangerous. Among the six year olds are the Prince of Wales's Ambush II., who has shown some form; Lady Gilderoy, Arezzo, Mercury II., Ferryman, who may be a good horse; Yorkmunt, a promising young chaser; Charter Oak, Glen Royal, winner of last year's Grand National Hunt Steeplechase at Hurst Park; Lord William Beresford's solitary nomination Easter Ogue, Mount Cashel, Hidden Mystery, who will take a lot of beating if the handicappers are not too

hard on him; Deeroagh, Tipperary Boy, and Covert Hack. The rest are all aged, and many of them have been trying for years to win this race.

Amongst these, Mani'festo is undoubtedly a great horse, and is sure to be well taken care of in the matter of weight, whilst I doubt if we have yet seen the best of Drogheda. He was certainly a "dog-horse" when he won this race in a snow-storm two years ago. I cannot help thinking that Gentle Ida must win this race some day, she is such a really good mare when fit and well; but I doubt, Parma Violet being so good over four and a-half miles of the Aintree country as she has often shown herself to be over three miles at Hurst and Kempton Parks. Montauk is such a flier over hurdles that, if he jumps a country as well as he does "timber," he must take a lot of beating, whilst such as Ford of Fyne, Cathal, Grudon, Barcalwhey, Dead Level, Swanshot, and Shaker are not likely to be overtaken with weight, considering how many unsuccessful attempts they have made of them made. Alpheus is entered, and he was a real good five year old, but may have lost his dash now; and the two Walers, Tornado II. and Battalion II., are also down to be handicapped. It is needless to say more about this race until the weights appear.

To go back, however, to last week's sport. At Gatwick, on Wednesday, we saw one good chaser in Chair of Kildare, who won the Purley Steeplechase in a common canter from Lord Percy and The Farne, to whom he was conceding 11lb. and 22lb. respectively. This is one of the very best jumpers in training—all the Baliols jump exceptionally well—and a very good horse over two miles, but there was nothing of any class among the six he beat. Bonnie Dundee, also by Baliol, who is fairly useful over "sticks" when he likes, won the Reigate Hurdle Race, and Lord William Beresford took two races, a Four Year Old Hurdle Race with Manatee, by the Australian sire Sir Modred, and the Manor Steeplechase with Heliograph II., probably useful six year old. On the second day the same sportsman's Lord Arravale was unequal to winning the Deepdene Handicap Steeplechase with 12st. 7lb., the winner turning up in old Nepcote, once a very smart horse over a country, but who gave way in his "Liverpool" preparation three years ago. The rest of the sport was of a most uninteresting description. How Mr. Verrall must sigh for the old Croydon days.

At Manchester, on Monday, the Waler Battalion II. won a Maiden Hurdle Race, and Athel Roy gave Stratocracy 3lb. and an easy beating in the Trafford Park Handicap Steeplechase. The latter was probably never so good a horse as he was said to be when bought with such a flourish of trumpets by Lord Cadogan to win the "Liverpool." Tuesday's racing was not worth noticing, nor was most of that at Lingfield, except the New Year's Handicap Steeplechase, won by the Australian Ebor, carrying 12st. 10lb., and who thereby showed some signs of his old brilliant form over two-mile courses. They were a terribly ragged lot that finished behind him, however. On Saturday, Deesartagh, by Asetic, beat Heliograph II. by a neck, at even weights, in the Hammerwood Steeplechase of two miles. To-morrow (Friday) there will be racing at Plumpton, where Sam and Ebor will probably win the Plumpton January Handicap Hurdle Race and the Ringmer Handicap Steeplechase; whilst on Saturday, at the same meeting, Sam is entered again, and Heliograph II. looks like taking the Southover Handicap Steeplechase.



W HATEVER may be said about the slough of despond into which National Hunt sport has fallen, no one can accuse racing under Jockey Club rules of showing any loss of vitality. Certain abuses connected with it there are, of course, such as the too early and too frequent racing of two year olds, the plethora of big stakes for three year olds, the universal system of robbing owners at every turn, and the licence afforded to the Messrs. Weatherby to fill their own pockets at the expense of everyone who has to do business with their office. But these will no doubt all be done away with in time, and even so we still have good horses in training, and good races for them to run for. These thoughts have been brought into my mind by the appearance of the entries for the Spring Handicaps, which are always so eagerly looked for at this dull period of the year.

For the first of these, the Lincolnshire Handicap, there are sixty-two entries, four less than last year, and although no particularly high-class miler is engaged, there is plenty of material for an interesting handicap. Among the older division we find the names of that useful horse General Peace, and his once stable companion Little Eva, Waterhen, the Australian Oban, and Gold Medallist, once thought to be good horses, Northern Farmer, Lord William Beresford's pair, Berzak and Chinook, and the Duke of Portland's misshapen beast Wantage, who once ran a good race. The four year olds supply a powerful contingent, among them being such as Innocence, Refractor, Damocles, Strike-a-Light, London, and Mazepa, whilst Downham is by no means an unuseful three year old. It hardly looks, however, as if this year's winner would be one of that age.

The City and Suburban, still the most popular of all the spring handicaps, has attracted fifty-eight entries, but hardly of the same class as we are accustomed to see. General Peace has been given another chance, as also has Refractor, whilst the four Walers, Survivor, Maluma, The Graftor, and Battalion II., are all down to be handicapped. The last-named is in the private sale list, at by no means excessive figure, and as he cannot be harshly dealt with by the handicapper, here is a chance for someone to secure a ready-made City and Suburban winner. Among the old horses I notice the names of Mount Prospect, whilst useful four year olds are Innocence, Good Luck, Damocles, Baldyole, Fascination, Lord William Beresford's pair, Sibola and Dominic II., and Mazepa. This is never a good race for three year olds, but with such as Goblet and Eloquence, to say nothing of Downham, Emotion, O'Donovan Rossa, Dum-Dum, and Cutaway to represent them, they look like holding their own this year. Battalion II., who is now jumping hurdles, and is entered for the Grand National, is also among those nominated for the Great Metropolitan Stakes, the entry for which includes the names of those useful stayers Labrador, Mitcham, King's Messenger, Chubb, Damocles, and Nouveau Riche.

That once good two year old Amurath, now four years old, is also among the entries.

It is absolutely useless to try to revive long-distance racing so long as two year olds are raced too early and too far and owners are encouraged by an inordinate number of big stakes to run their horses off their legs at three years of age. For the Chester Cup, therefore, of two miles and a-quarter and worth 2,550 sovereigns, there are only forty-four entries. As Amurath's name appears in the entries, both for this race and the Great Metropolitan, it is evident that Escort thinks he can stay, whilst one's eye stops at the Irish four year old Oppressor, Dinnar Forget, not usually regarded as a stayer, Manners, Tom Cringle, Barford, King's Messenger, Herminius, and Mitcham. The Waler Graftor has been put in, and I had almost forgotten that good five year old Calveley, whilst among the few three year olds I notice the names of Goblet and Hulcot. The Hurst Park Spring Handicap of a mile and a-half, and worth 1,000 sovereigns, has done fairly well, as also have the London Cup at Alexandra Park and the Liverpool Spring Cup, but taken all round nothing has been so well patronised by owners as the Kempton Park "Jubilee." In this popular handicap are the old horses Maluma, Hawfinch, Sligo, Greenan, General Peace, Ninus, Sirenia, Dieudonne, and Champ de Mars; such four year olds as Flambard, Le Blizon, Irish Ivy, Scintillant, Mazepa, Dominic II., Sibola, Oppressor, Good Luck, Innocence, Damocles, Kent, Baldyole, Fascination, and Ercildoune; whilst among the three year olds we find the names of Blacksmith, Paigle, Downham, Goblet, Eloquence, and O'Donovan Rossa. This is evidently going to be by far the most interesting of all this year's Spring Handicaps. It is satisfactory to learn that, although the unfortunate death of the Duke of Westminster rendered his nominations void in so many races, the arrangements made about most of the best of his horses will ensure the yellow banner of the House of Grosvenor being a prominent feature of the coming season.

OUTPOST.



FISHING IN BRITTANY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE".]

SIR,—Can any of the readers of COUNTRY LIFE give me any information about the fishing to be obtained in Brittany, particularly in the neighbourhood of Huelgoat? Is it true that the rivers are poached to such an extent that the sport to be obtained is not worth going for?—HUBERT J. ELLIOTT.

THE COMPARATIVE SPEED OF BIRDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE".]

SIR,—Captain Radclyffe's account of what was taking place in the air above and around the flight of wild duck so vividly shown in COUNTRY LIFE under the title of "Duck Shooting Extraordinary," makes the latter doubly interesting. The two make a unique record in the phenomena of flights. Mr. Masey would have given much to have had this picture and Captain Radclyffe's experiences to insert in his standard work on "Le Vol des Oiseaux." The absence of good records by sportsmen and field naturalists was constantly deplored by him. I quite agree that the larger bird ought, if built on proper lines, to go faster than the smaller one. Two instances occur to my recollection. One is that Mr. J. G. Millais states that the Reeves pheasant, when flushed with common pheasants, leaves the latter far behind; another, that I have been told that at Whittingham, in a glen over which both pheasants and partridges are driven, the former always get across first. On the other hand, I recently timed wild geese flying, and found that they went more slowly than anyone would credit; but they had not a hawk after them. Perhaps Captain Radclyffe would give his experiences of stern chases after different birds by falcons. It would be interesting to know what birds can beat them in straight flight and pursuit, when there has been no previous "mountee." I know that this is not what the falconer likes; but it does happen, and what happened on such a "course" would be instructive.—C. J. CORNISH.

EVERGREEN AND FLOWERING SHRUBS FOR LIMESTONE SOIL AND UNDER TREES.

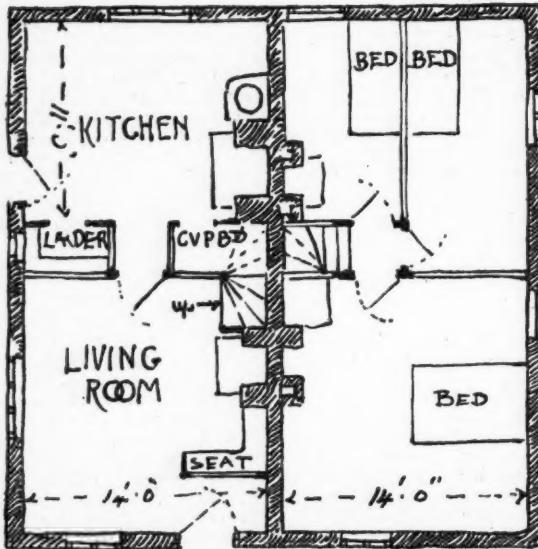
[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE".]

SIR,—I should feel obliged if you would give me a list of (a) evergreen and (b) flowering shrubs which will grow in limestone soil. Where I live the soil is impregnated with lime, with gravel limestone subsoil, and rhododendrons do not grow here. I should also be glad if you would say (c) what evergreen shrubs will grow under beech trees.—DENMARK.

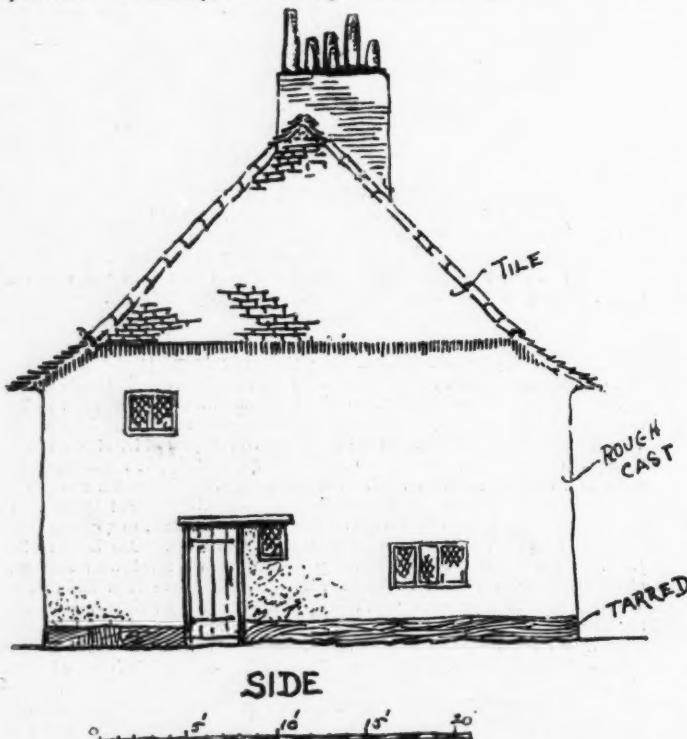
[Although one cannot hope to grow rhododendrons, azaleas, and other American peat plants where lime abounds, there is a rich collection of beautiful shrubs available that will succeed tolerably well in such a soil as you possess. Special care is necessary when dealing with a soil of this character to have it well tilled, and also to give the shrubs a good start, by placing round their roots a few shovelfuls of prepared compost, such as a mixture of loam, old pot soil, and well-decayed manure in about equal parts. We can recommend the following evergreens as suitable to plant in your locality: Berberis of sorts, including those known as Mahonia, alaternus (*Rhamnus*), *Cupressus macrocarpus*, *Cupressus Lawsoniana*, box of sorts, broom, escallonia, euonymus, sweet bay, holly of sorts, laurustinus, *Olearia Haastii*, *Phillyrea*, pines of sorts, Privet ovalifolium (green and variegated), *Garrya elliptica*, veronicas, cotoneasters, *diplopappus*, tree ivy, laurels, osmanthus, yews, thurias or arbor-vitae. Some good deciduous flowering shrubs for the same soil are: Almonds, *Hibiscus*, *Kerria*, *Euonymus europaeus*, *Fuchsia gracilis*, guelder rose, hypericum, lilacs, *Daphne mezereum*, *Prunus* of sorts, hydrangeas, *Ribes*, *spiraecas*, *Weigela*, mock orange, double and single thorns, double cherries, laburnums, flowering crab, etc. Such things as laurels, common holly, aucubas, *Mahonia aquifolium*, tree box, butcher's broom, English yews, and double furze would do very well under trees.—ED.]

LABOURERS' COTTAGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]
SIR,—You have done so much to draw attention to the beauties of the English village that one is inclined to regret that you should have put Dr. Bussell's plans for labourers' cottages before the public as a model for imitation. Were such cottages to be multiplied in our villages it would be nothing less than a calamity. No external views are given, but from the general proportions, size of windows, and pitch of roof, it is clear that the general appearance of the building would be that of a flimsy villa rather than that of a pair of country cottages; indeed, the very kind of thing which one is striving to keep out of the country. I am afraid Dr. Bussell has got hold of what is, after all, but a typical jerry-builder's plan. It is, perhaps, hardly worth criticising in detail; but the first thing that occurs to one is that, one chimney stack being cheaper than three, all the fireplaces should be grouped upon the party wall, thereby keeping the warmth of the flues inside the house—a matter of some moment when you are compelled to use 9in. walls. Neither is the staircase economically arranged, and if better placed would allow of a more convenient kitchen. I enclose a plan showing what seems to me a bet'er way of solving the problem, viz., how to erect a very cheap pair of cottages on a plan about 30ft. square. By following the typical old arrangement of a stair winding up by the side of the chimney, I am able to get kitchens 14ft. by 11ft. instead of



(DOWNSTAIRS) PLAN (UPSTAIRS)



10ft. by 10ft., and six bedrooms instead of five. Only those who have lived in a house with external walls only one brick thick know how essential it is that the windows should be small and few. If only the rooms are comfortably low ventilation is easy enough.—FREDERICK CHARLES EDEN.

[In publishing Dr. Bussell's plans we expected criticism, and we invited correspondence, and we are therefore grateful to Mr. Eden for his letter and plans. For the present it is our desire to avoid pronouncing anything in the nature of final judgment. We will, therefore, say no more than that Dr. Bussell's plans commended themselves to us mainly because they showed that inhabitable cottages could be and had been built at a very cheap and definite price. Mr. Eden's letter would be more complete if it named price.—ED.]

MOTTO FOR A GARDEN SEAT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—May I very humbly suggest the following slight alteration from Byron (I understand the seat faces the tennis ground): "No rest till eve when youth and pleasure meet, to chase the bounding balls with flying feet!"—ARTHUR BATE.

MUSHROOMS IN WINTER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should be much obliged if you could procure me full particulars for growing mushrooms during the winter on a very small scale. Would a warm dark outhouse do, etc.? Where is the best place to get mushroom spawn? I ask this as I have read in COUNTRY LIFE that you are willing to assist readers in difficulties concerning their gardens, and am a subscriber to COUNTRY LIFE.—ALEXANDER V. HEECKEREN, Keppel.

[Mushrooms can be grown much better in winter in outhouses, sheds, or buildings than anywhere else, and the procedure is simple if attention be paid to minute details at the start, such as preparation of the manure, temperature of the bed at spawning, and moisture afterwards. Many crops are spoiled by the heat of the beds fluctuating too much, and not so much through the building or

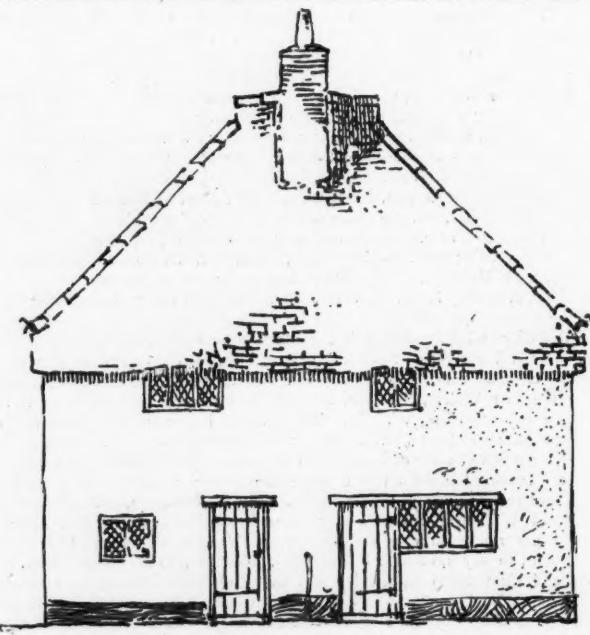
house. Much warmth is not really necessary; if a temperature of 50deg. can be maintained, better crops are obtained at that temperature than in a warm house fitted with hot-water pipes and modern appliances. The manure is the first necessity, and this may be collected daily, the best being fresh droppings from horses fed on corn and hay. This collected daily and laid out to dry in a shed, but exposed to winds, will be ready in a fortnight or three weeks, if turned over daily as fresh manure is added. It is well during the last day or two to place the manure collected in a large heap to get rid of the rank heat, and if it approaches a white heat open out and expose a short time longer, as it must be sweet. It is now ready to place in the building, and may be well trodden or rammed as it is placed in position. If the manure has become too cool, add a small quantity of fresh material; if too hot, place it in much thinner, and do not tread it for a day or two. Spawning is safe when the heat is declining and at 50deg., but not otherwise. Previous to spawning be sure the heat is declining, form the bed thoroughly, and break up the spawn bricks into pieces the size of a large walnut. Make holes in the bed at a distance of 12in. to 15in. apart, and insert the spawn at 3in. depth, or, say, just clear of the surface; fill in the holes with the rammer, now making the

bed as hard as possible. The latter is an important detail, and the firmer the bed the longer the heat is retained and the better hold the spawn gets. After the spawning, cover the surface of the bed with 2in. of rather heavy fine soil—light soil is not so good, as the mushrooms do not get root hold—spread the soil evenly, and beat firmly and as smoothly as possible with the back of the spade. We often use a little water to make it quite smooth, as then the bed retains the warmth better. The soil before it is used should be placed in the house to get warmed, and a thermometer used to test the heat of the bed from its formation. After spawning, should the bed get too cool, cover with a little warm litter for a time, and keep some fresh manure in the house if there is no other means of heating, but if possible do not let the bed get too low before spawning. In a month to six weeks the mushrooms will appear, and then the beds when in bearing may be lightly damped over with tepid water from a syringe, also the floors and walls of the house twice daily, except in wet or severe weather. To assist the crop, a watering of tepid liquid manure, with a little salt added, will promote fresh growth, but avoid over-watering or damping at any time. The temperature of the house may be kept as near 50deg. as possible, but 5deg. lower will do no harm in cold weather, and in unheated houses we have, in order to create warmth, placed long warm stable litter against the door. A bed made every month from September to March will provide a regular supply, or three beds, one in September, one in November, and one in January or February, will give a winter supply. If only small quantities of manure can be procured, small beds should be made more frequently. Spawn can be obtained in this country from all leading seedsmen, and is best procured each autumn.—ED.]

POLLARDED TREES DYING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—As you kindly answer enquiries in gardening and forestry, would you tell me how it is that a number of young trees about, say, 3in. to 4in. in diameter, which I pollarded three winters ago, have died? They were carefully sawn across, and most of them threw out a profusion of young shoots, which died off. They were cut about 3ft. to 4ft. high, in order to be clear of rabbits. The trees consisted of various hard woods—ash, elm, willow, poplar, alder.—S. [It is impossible to say what caused the trees to die, unless it was their being eaten by rabbits at the ground. The cutting over should not have killed the trees. Perhaps the roots are diseased, but even that would not explain destruction on such a scale. Examine the roots and necks of the trees.—ED.]



FRONT